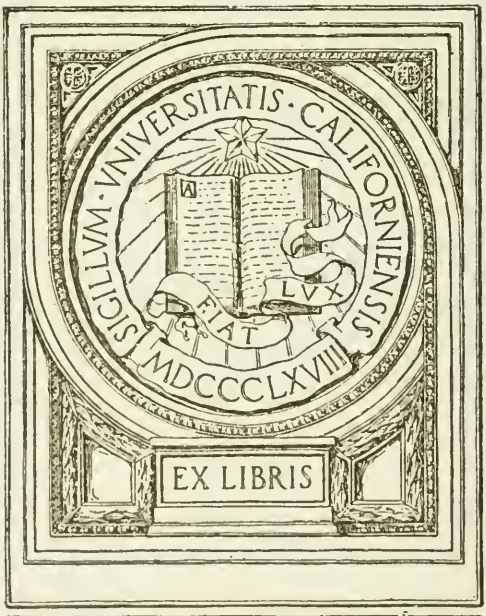

FURTHER ESSAYS ON BORDER BALLADS

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BY

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'THE TRUSTWORTHINESS OF BORDER BALLADS'

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PREFACE

In writing the following essays my object has been to determine on the genuineness, or otherwise, of four well-known Border ballads. Three of these, namely, the so-called Scottish version of the ballad of the 'Battle of Otterburn,' 'Auld Maitland,' and 'Kinmont Willie,' were published for the first time by Sir Walter Scott in the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*; the fourth was known to but not published by Sir Walter, who for some reason preferred to place in his work what was clearly a later version.

'Auld Maitland' and the 'Battle of Otterburn' have frequently been quoted by our great writers as extremely interesting instances of traditions of historic incidents having been handed down orally, in the shape of verse, through very many generations, and so also has 'Kinmont Willie,' though, of course, the interest therein is of less degree, since it relates to comparatively modern times.

The fourth ballad, namely, 'Jamie Telfer i' the Fair Dodhead,' was not made known to the public until Professor Child published his great collection of ballads between 1882 and 1898, and I do not think any writer—myself excepted—has done more than merely note its existence ; they have preferred to dilate on the beauty of certain stanzas in the later version, which is but a perversion of the original. And yet, the ballad, if genuine, is of more than usual interest, partly on account of the vividness with which it describes an insignificant Border foray—and the interest remains, even though the incident were, as one authority on the subject avers, imaginary ; partly, because the narrative fits perfectly the topographical requirements of the district ; partly, because the persons named in it truly flourished at the time, and were frequently engaged in scenes similar to those depicted ; and partly, because the main incidents appear to be based on facts recorded in official documents.

No one will deny that these ballads, if genuine, are of extreme interest, and well deserve being recorded in the literary history of the periods to which they severally relate ; on the other hand, if not genuine,

they should be placed in the literature of the period at which they were composed.

The first essay relates to the Scottish version of the 'Battle of Otterburn,' which I endeavour to show is a compilation, partly of stanzas of modern fabrication, and partly of stanzas belonging to earlier versions, all of which have been composed, or altered, in such a way as to give to the whole the appearance of being an original narrative, consonant with Scottish sentiment, tradition, or history. It has, in my opinion, no claim to the title it bears.

In the second chapter, the old English ballads of 'Chevy-Chase' and 'Otterburn' are subjected to close analysis, with the intention of showing that they contain many stanzas of Scottish origin, and that these, or at all events such as clearly relate to the battle of Otterburn, if grouped together, constitute a Scottish, and a well-connected, intelligible ballad. I suggest the possibility that this reconstructed version may bear a not very remote resemblance in essentials to the old, original ballad, which, there can be but little doubt, truly existed in old days and was composed at a time when the incidents referred to were still fresh in the minds of the

people; the original ballad, *if* it was in truth composed not long after the battle, was Scotch, not English.

The third essay has 'Kinmont Willie' for its theme. Many writers have expressed doubt as to the extent of the emendations, which, Sir Walter Scott told us, he had found necessary to make in the ballad previous to publishing it, and they have suggested that he composed a considerable portion of it himself; I cannot, however, remember any sound reasons, or indeed any at all, having been given for this view, and consequently I have thought it desirable to investigate the matter. The conclusions I come to are, firstly, that the whole ballad is based on the curious old rhymes written by Captain Walter Scot of Satchells in the middle of the seventeenth century, and, secondly, that Sir Walter Scott composed the whole of it.

The three remaining papers are on 'Jamie Telfer i' the Fair Dodhead' and 'Auld Maitland.' From a chronological point of view it would have been preferable for the latter to have been the very first ballad considered in this work, but the circumstances in which it came to light are so closely connected

with those surrounding the birth of the ballad of 'Jamie Telfer,' that it would have been inconvenient to deal with them apart. In the first of these three papers the genesis of the two ballads is discussed; the subject is one upon which Mr. Andrew Lang has already written,[1] and a considerable portion of what I here say is but a criticism of his views. No very definite conclusions are expressed in this paper, which should be regarded, not as being a complete essay in itself, but merely as an introduction to the two that follow it.

In the first of these, I answer the question which heads it, namely, 'Is "Jamie Telfer i' the Fair Dodhead" a genuine ballad?' After closely considering the pros and cons, I arrive at the conclusion that the weight of evidence is in favour of its being so; yet I have to admit that to clear it entirely of well-founded suspicion is beyond my power.

The last essay is on 'Auld Maitland.' The genuineness of this ballad has for long been doubted, and

[1] See the Literary Supplement of the *Times*, July 30, 1906, and the *Scottish Historical Review* for July of the same year, in which Mr. Lang reviewed a book I had shortly before published, entitled *The Trustworthiness of Border Ballads*; see also his introduction to Mr. Farrer's *Literary Forgeries* (1907), and the chapter in that work dealing with 'Ballad Forgeries.'

for this reason, presumably, Professor Child excluded it from his collection. I do not think—I may be quite wrong in this—that he, or any other authority, has clearly mentioned the reasons for suspecting more than portions of the ballad to be spurious, although believing the whole to be so. On the other hand, Mr. Lang believes that the greater part of the ballad, or perhaps I should say, the whole, is genuine, and in the above-mentioned chapter in *Ballad Forgeries* he fully sets out his reasons.

The object of my essay is to determine which of these antagonistic views is probably the true one; the conclusion drawn is wholly and entirely in favour of the former.

FITZWILLIAM ELLIOT.

EDINBURGH, *November* 1909.

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ON THE SCOTTISH VERSION OF THE BALLAD OF THE BATTLE OF OTTERBURN

ON THE SCOTTISH VERSION OF THE BALLAD OF THE BATTLE OF OTTERBURN

In the following pages I propose to consider whether the ballad, entitled 'The Battle of Otterburn,' published by Sir Walter Scott in the third edition of the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (1806) and subsequent editions, has a just claim to be accepted as an old and genuine Scottish ballad.

In the first place it will be as well to glance for a moment at two other ballads bearing the same title, one English and one Scottish, which were in existence when the *Minstrelsy* made its appearance.

In the English ballad, published in the *Reliques of Ancient Poetry* (1765), and believed by the editor, Dr. Percy, and also by Mr. Ritson, to have been composed not later than in the reign of Henry VI. (1422-1461), the story of the battle of Otterburn, fought on the 9th (?) August 1388, is told thus :—

Stanza

1. About Lammas time (early in August) Earl
2. Douglas invades England, the Earl of Fife moving *via* the Solway.

Stanza

3. The former marches *via* Ottercap, etc., and burns
4. a large part of Northumberland.
5, 6. He is advised to advance on Newcastle.
7. Next day he does so, and upon his arrival
8. challenges Sir Henry Percy and others within
9. the castle to come out and fight, at the same
10. time insulting them by telling them that they had burned Northumberland, Percy's heritage.
11. Percy, from the castle walls, exclaims to Douglas
12. that for the wrong the latter had done him, one of the two must die.
13. 'Where shall I await you?' asks the Douglas.
14. 'At Otterburn,' replies Percy, 'it shall not be
15. long before I come.'
16. 'There shall I wait,' says Douglas.
'There shall I come,' says Percy.
17. Percy then gives wine to Douglas and his men,
18. who thereupon retire on Otterbourne. Here
19. Douglas sets up his standard and sends his horses to grass.
20. At daybreak a knight, who is on guard, becoming
21. aware of Percy's approach, rushes off to
22. inform Douglas that the English are advancing with seven standards.
23, 24. Douglas at first doubts the truth of this re-
25. port, but subsequently orders his men to be aroused.
26. He then forms his army into three divisions, gives
27. the command of one—the advance guard—to
28. the Earl of Menteith, of another, to Lord Buchan, and he himself takes the third.

Second Fytte

Stanza

1. Percy, at the head of his troops, again tells
2. Douglas that for the trespass he has done, one of the two must die.
3. To this Douglas points out to Percy that he (Douglas) has twenty men for every one of his,
4. and suggests that Percy should come and verify this for himself.
5. Percy then dismounts, and his men do likewise.
6, 7. He has only 9000 men, the Scots 40,000.
8.-16. As the battle is commencing, Percy receives a letter from his father bidding him to wait until he should come up. But Percy directs the messenger to reply that his honour forbade his doing so; at the same time, he orders the archers to shoot, the minstrels to play, and every man to think of his true love, and to commend himself to God.

While on the Scottish side the Douglas standard
17. with the bloody heart flies high, so also on the
18. English side does the white lion of the Percys.
19, 20. The Scots shout 'St. Andrew!' the English 'St.
21. George!'
21. The arrows fly, the soldiers join battle, and many fall.
22–28. Percy and Douglas meet and fight together; Douglas calls on Percy to yield; he refuses and kills Douglas.
29, 30. The battle continued all day and night.
31–34. There were slain, on the Scottish side, Sir James Douglas, Menteith, etc., and of 44,000 Scots went but 18[000 ?] away.

Stanza

On the English side were slain, Sir John Fitz-Hugh, Harbottle, etc., and of 9000 men 500 came away.

39. Next morning the dead were removed.

40. The battle began between night and day. Douglas was killed ; Percy taken prisoner.

41. Sir Hugh Montgomery was taken prisoner by the English and was exchanged for Percy.

'Let us all for the Percy praye,

42. . . . . .

For he was a gentyll knyght.'

The story is throughout perfectly well connected and is simply and intelligibly told ; there is in it little indicative of poetical imagination, nothing intentionally pathetic, for even stanza 39 of the second part, or fit, namely :

Then on the morn they mayd them beeres
Of byrch, and haysell graye ;
Many a wydowe with wepyng teyres
Ther makes they fette awaye—

is, in fact, merely a narration of occurrences common to every combat and battle in those days.

But, what is peculiarly striking is the chivalrous spirit attributed to both Douglas and Percy. The latter, after accepting the challenge to fight, supplies his enemies with wine ; later, when Percy at the head of his army approaches the Scottish camp,

Douglas points out to him how much stronger the Scots are than the English, and offers to let Percy verify this for himself—Douglas has no wish to take advantage of his superior numbers. And again, when the battle was about to commence, Percy declines to wait for the reinforcements which his father is bringing up, for to do so would, he considered, have been inconsistent with honour.

Now let us look at the other ballad—the Scottish one—which was published in Herd's *Ancient and Modern Scottish Songs and Ballads* (1776). The story is told thus :—

Stanzas

1–4. At about Lammas, Earl Douglas, accompanied by the Lindsays and Gordons, raids England, burning Northumberland and Otter-dale ; here a boy, servant to one of Douglas's kin, reports the advance of an English force.

5, 6. Douglas tells the boy that if his report be true he shall be rewarded, but if false, hanged.

7. The boy stabs Douglas, mortally wounding him.

8. Douglas then gives the command of the vanguard of three divisions to Sir Hugh Montgomery ; he also asks him to bury him at 'yon bracken bush.'

9–14. Percy and Montgomery meet and fight together ; the latter calls upon the former to yield. Percy then asks to whom it is he is to surrender, and Montgomery tells him to surrender to the bracken bush. 'Never to a bracken bush, nor

to a brier,' answers Percy, 'but if Douglas or Montgomery were here, I would yield to him.' Then, finding his adversary to be Montgomery, he surrenders. This occurred at Otterbourne about daybreak. Douglas was buried at the bracken bush, Percy led captive away.

The story is not so well connected as in Percy's version, and is evidently made up of fragments. Thus the second couplet of the second stanza which is as follows—

He has chosen the Lindsays light,
With them the gallant Gordons gay,
And the Earl of Fyfe withouten strife,
And Sir Hugh Montgomery upon a grey'—

is absurd. The third line occurs in the second stanza of the *Reliques* version where, however, the reference is perfectly intelligible, and is historically correct—

The yerlle of Fyffe, withowghten stryffe,
He bowynd hym over Sulway.

Again, lines must surely have been lost which would have explained why the boy, after having been promised by Douglas a reward in the event of his report as to Percy's advance proving true—as it did—should have stabbed him.

Some of the few facts related by this version agree with those in Percy's version; others do not.

There is agreement as to the season and district in which the occurrences took place; also as to Douglas having been warned of the approach of the English, and of his doubting the accuracy of the report; also as to the vanguard being one of three divisions; and also as to the broad facts that Douglas, the commander of the Scottish army, was killed, and that Percy, the commander of the English, was taken prisoner.

They differ as to the manner of Douglas's death—Herd's version ascribing it to assassination by one of his own men, the *Reliques* version as the result of a personal combat with Percy; again, according to the former version, Percy is taken prisoner by Montgomery after a hand-to-hand fight; according to the latter version, Montgomery was himself taken prisoner, and afterwards exchanged for Percy. The accounts of the combat between Percy and Douglas, in the one version, and between Percy and Montgomery, in the other, are practically identical.

There is a markedly different note in Herd's stanzas from that in Dr. Percy's ballad—a more pleasing one, perhaps, to those who are not stirred by the high chivalrous sentiments of the latter, and a more imaginative and poetical one. Not that Herd's version is wanting in chivalrous sentiment, for what could be more truly chivalrous, more

courteous, more characteristic of modest gallantry, than Montgomery's suggestion to Percy that he should surrender, not to him, but to the bracken bush where the great Douglas lay dead ?

One word more regarding these two ballads ; the one published by Dr. Percy was printed from MSS. in the Cotton Library and in the Harleian Collection, and is thought by some authorities to date from the reign of Henry VI. or even earlier. As to the ballad, or fragments of a ballad published by Herd, I do not think we are told how he became acquainted with them ; the story of Douglas's assassination is told by Hume of Godscroft and was probably very generally believed in, but whether it was true or not is really immaterial ; the main point of interest lies in the fact that the incident related in the ballad is similar to a tradition recorded by a historian of the reign of James VI.

On the other hand, the story in the *Reliques* version of Douglas and Percy having fought hand-to-hand at Otterburn and of the former having been killed by the latter, is, so far as I know, supported neither by history nor by tradition.

I have now given a slight sketch of the only two ballads on the battle of Otterburn—if we except that of Chevy-Chase, which will be gone into very fully

in a subsequent chapter—in existence in 1802, when the first two volumes of the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* were published by Sir Walter Scott. The ballad of Otterburn therein given is Herd's version.[1]

Shortly afterwards another, and a very different version appeared!

In the third edition of the *Minstrelsy* (1806) the following sentence occurs in the prefatory note to the ballad: 'This song was first published from Mr. Herd's *Collection of Scottish Songs and Ballads*, 1774 (?1776); but fortunately two copies have since been obtained from the recitation of old persons residing at the head of Ettrick Forest.' It is, then, upon these recitations that the ballad, now looked upon as the standard Scottish version, is founded as regards those points in which it differs from Herd's version.

[1] Or rather Herd's version 'corrected by a MS. copy.' These seem, however, to have been practically identical, for, with the exception of trivial verbal variations, such as 'Lord' for 'Earl,' 'Bambroshire' for 'Northshire,' etc., the only important difference between the corrected version, published in the *Minstrelsy*, and the original, published by Herd, is that the eleventh stanza of the latter, which runs,

O yield thee to yon bracken bush,
That grows upon yon lilye lee,
. . . .

is preceded in the *Minstrelsy* version by the couplet,

Thou shalt not yield to lord nor loun,
Nor yet shalt thou yield to me.

I am afraid I must now make a few remarks with regard to the reliance we ought to place on the authenticity of ballads obtained through recitation.

I presume that when a ballad is said to be thus obtained, we are expected to believe that it has been passed down orally for generations to the reciter; there can be no other cause for interest.

Now, with the advance of civilisation and with the spread of literature, there can be no question whatever that the habit, which at one period may have been common to all ranks of society, of reciting songs and ballads would have gradually passed away, in the first place from the higher classes, and then, more gradually still, from the peasantry. It is, therefore, natural to think that, since more ballads must have been known to the people in old days than now, ballad-collectors of those times would have obtained a greater number from recitation than would later ballad-collectors. But as a matter of fact, this appears to be the very reverse of what has actually occurred.

If we examine the notes prefixed to the ballads in Professor Child's enormous collection of English and Scottish popular ballads—I refer to the smaller edition (Cambridge edition, 1904), for the original edition is far too colossal a work for the ordinary

reader to make use of—we shall find over a hundred have been obtained from recitation ; of these only about fifteen come from English sources (including four from the United States of America), while the rest are all from Scottish sources.

Of the English fifteen, five appear to have been recited before 1802 ; the remaining ten were got at various dates between 1843 and 1896.

Of the Scottish ballads—say, ninety or a hundred —one, namely 'Johnnie Armstrong,' was published, from the recitation of the hero's lineal descendant of the sixth degree, by Allan Ramsay in the *Evergreen*, 1724. Another was obtained by Herd from the recitation of a milkmaid ; and seven others were recited by Mrs. Brown of Falkland between 1783 and 1800. Possibly I may have missed one or two others obtained before 1800.

With regard to the remaining eighty or ninety ballads, the dates at which they were severally taken down from recitation are very frequently omitted, but of those in which the dates are given, it appears that, between 1800 and 1814, ten were thus obtained ; none during the next ten years ; then between 1824 and 1829, there were fifteen ; during the 'thirties,' one ; during the 'forties,' two ; during the 'fifties,' four ; during the sixties,' one ; during the 'seventies,' one ; and between 1880 and 1890, six.

It must not be thought that I have any wish to throw doubt on the veracity of those who have testified to ballads having been taken down from recitation ; I do not question that point, but I do question very much whether we are right to assume that all these ballads have come down orally from days long past to the reciters.

For instance, the version of the ballad ' Henry Martyn,' called ' Andrew Bartin,' was, we are told, ' communicated by Miss Louise Porter Haskell as derived from General E. P. Alexander of South Carolina, and derived by him from the singing of a cadet at West Point Military Academy in the winter 1856-7. Two or three slight corrections have been made by Mrs. A. C. Haskell, sister of Gen. Alexander.'

Or, again, we read that a version of ' The Farmer's Curst Wife ' was ' taken down by Mr. Macmath from the recitation of his aunt, Miss Jane Webster, Crossmichael, Kirkcudbrightshire, August 27, 1892 ; learned many years ago, at Airds of Kells, from the singing of Samuel Galloway.' There are many very similar notes, though perhaps none in which the facts are borne out by better evidence. I have no doubt of the truth of the statements, but they are not in themselves sufficient to prove the antiquity of the ballads.

Not very many years ago, a ballad entitled ' Little

Jock Elliot' was published anonymously in some Scottish newspaper—the *Scotsman*, I think—and was at once hailed as the long-lost ballad relating the hand-to-hand fight between Lord Bothwell (of Queen Mary's time) and John Elliot of the Park. The real author, Mr. Smail, at once made it known that it was a creation of his own brain and had no claim whatever to be considered ancient. In spite of this disclaimer, when I published a year or two ago a book entitled *The Trustworthiness of Border Ballads*, in which a chapter had been devoted to remarks on the fragments still remaining of the ancient song, a very distinguished Borderer wrote to me pointing out the omission I had been guilty of in not reproducing the version which had lately been recovered on the Borders!

Now, supposing Mr. Smail had not published his verses, and supposing further that his MS. had been lost or destroyed but that his children had learned the stanzas by heart—as might well have happened—and their children also, in course of time the ballad, and various versions too, would doubtless come to light to be greedily seized upon as a thoroughly well-authenticated instance of a genuine old ballad having been handed down orally through many generations. I quote this case merely to show how easily we may quite honestly deceive

ourselves as to the genuineness of ballads obtained from recitation.

In the *Evergreen* (1724) Allan Ramsay tells us that the Scots poems therein contained ' were wrote by the ingenious before 1600,' and only one, namely, ' Johnnie Armstrong,' does he claim as having been obtained from recitation.

Again, in his *Tea-Table Miscellany* (1724-40) he tells us that above sixty of the songs are of his own composition, ' about thirty more were done by some ingenious young gentlemen. . . . The rest are such old verses as have been done time out of mind, and only wanted to be cleared from the dross of blundering transcribers and printers.' Not a word is there of getting any from recitation.

Again, in Dr. Percy's large collection, *Reliques of Ancient English and Scottish Poetry* (1765), nearly all are from MSS. and printed copies ; very few profess to have been obtained from recitation and those few are, I think, all Scotch. ' Hardyknute ' was one !

Again, in Herd's preface to the 1776 edition of his collection of Scottish songs, we are told that many of the old ballads ' are recovered from tradition or old MSS. and never before appeared in print.' Such as he ' recovered from tradition ' may, perhaps, have been obtained from recitation, but if so he would, in

all probability, have attached a note to that effect, as in the case of 'The Bonny Hind,' to which the following is prefixed: 'Copied from the mouth of a milkmaid, 1771, by W. L.'[1]

Again, in the *Poetical Museum* (Hawick, 1784) all the originals are from MSS. Not one was obtained from recitation.

Again, in Ritson's *Ancient Songs and Ballads*, 1790, all are, apparently, from printed copies and MS.

At page lxxxviii of his *Dissertation on Ancient Songs and Poetry*, he writes that he 'has frequently heard of traditional songs, but has had very little success in his endeavours to hear the songs themselves.'[2] In a footnote, however, he mentions that Dr. Blacklock, the author of Blacklock's *Poems* (1756), had 'made allusion to a sort of narrative songs, which make no inconsiderable part of the innocent amusements with which the country people pass the

[1] See prefatory note to the 'Bonny Hind' in the *Minstrelsy*. The ballad is not included in Herd's published collection.

[2] That Ritson was not absolutely destitute of success would appear from a statement in Sir Walter Scott's prefatory note to 'Rookhope Ryde,' to the effect that Ritson took down the ballad from the mouth of a reciter. Possibly, however, Ritson may not have considered it a 'traditional song'; in the *Minstrelsy* it is referred to as 'a Bishopric Border song, composed in 1569.' It may be worth noticing that the date of the event recorded in the ballad has 'been precisely ascertained to be the 6th December 1572' (!).—(Cadell's edition, 1833.)

winter nights, and of which the author of the present piece was a faithful rehearser.' Upon this Ritson remarks that 'it is a great pity if these pieces have any merit that some attempt is not made to preserve them.'

Again, we hear of a large MS. collection of ballads being in the possession of a Dr. Elliot, a clergyman in Liddesdale. Lockhart's *Life of Scott* (vol. i. p. 197) tells us that, in 1792, Scott became acquainted with it, and Dr. Elliot seeing how much he admired his acquisition, 'exerted himself for several years in seeking out the living depositaries of such lore among the darker recesses of the mountains.' What success Dr. Elliot met with is not recorded, but a close examination of the contents of the *Minstrelsy* proves that, if he made any discoveries at all, they were not considered of sufficient interest to merit a place in that collection.

Lastly, we come to Sir Walter Scott's collection in his *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, and here we find that out of about seventy ballads, only thirteen are *wholly* from MSS.; thirty-three are from, or owe some stanzas to, recitation; eleven are from tradition or partly so; a few are reprints; and with regard to some the information given is not sufficiently precise to enable us to pronounce definitely the source from which they spring.

A change, whether for better or worse, in the art of ballad collecting had indeed come about! The old well, from which ancient songs hitherto had been drawn, was running dry, and a new spring, gushing forth recitations, had been discovered. It is impossible not to think of the story told in Lockhart's *Life* regarding Scott's 'equipping his chapters (in the Waverley Novels) with mottoes of his own fabrication. On one occasion he happened to ask John Ballantyne, who was sitting by him, to hunt for a particular passage in Beaumont and Fletcher. John did as he was bid, but did not succeed in discovering the lines. "Hang it, Johnnie," cried Scott, "I believe I can make a motto sooner than you can find one." He did so, accordingly, and from that hour, whenever memory failed to suggest an appropriate epigraph, he had recourse to the inexhaustible mines of "Old Play" or "Old Ballad," to which we owe some of the most exquisite verses that ever flowed from his pen.' Sir Walter himself tells us that he found it too troublesome to look up apposite mottoes, and so 'I drew on my memory as long as I could, and, when that failed, eked it out with invention. I believe that, in some cases, where actual names are affixed to the supposed quotations, it would be to little purpose to seek them in the works of the authors referred to. In some

cases, I have been entertained when Dr. Watts and other graver authors have been ransacked in vain for stanzas for which the novelist was alone responsible.'[1]

It will be rightly said that I am making the suggestion, which some will call outrageous, that since Sir Walter invented mottoes for various chapters in his novels, it is not improbable that he may have also invented ballads for his *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*. Though we cannot help laughing at the joke he played on the public in attaching the names of Dr. Watts and other grave authors to verses of his own composition—verses which in themselves were not only unobjectionable but were of such high merit that any author might have been proud to have written them—yet it would have been better, in my opinion at all events, if he had not done so.

But whether it was an objectionable thing to have done or not, there can be no question that he, who saw in it nothing but a harmless joke, can equally have seen no harm in the much less trivial offence—if I may use that word—of inserting a stanza into an anonymous poem to complete the sense or to render readable what otherwise would remain unread—and if one stanza, why not two ? or three ? or a dozen ?

[1] Introduction to *Chronicles of the Canongate*.

or why not perpetuate some interesting tradition by throwing it into the form of attractive verse ?

But, it will be said, since he acknowledged the graver offence, he would not have hesitated, had he been guilty, of confessing also the minor. Well, we must not let ourselves be blind to a good man's actions, simply because he did not see fit to inform us of them, and there can be no doubt whatever that Scott did insert stanzas, strings of stanzas, of his own composition into many of the *Minstrelsy* ballads ;[1] yet not once, I believe, in the whole of that work does he admit to being the author of a single line ; he goes no further than, in two instances, to mention that ' some conjectured emendations were necessary,' and he does not even specify what these were ; there is reason to think that in one of these instances, they form almost the whole, if not indeed the whole ballad.

It is not for me to consider the possible motives which may have actuated Sir Walter—this would be more thoroughly and satisfactorily done by those who, unlike myself, see nothing objectionable in what he did—and I shall here say nothing more in his defence than to quote his own words with refer-

[1] In the case of 'Jamie Telfer' this has been proved up to the hilt ; see Part III. of the chapter on that ballad in *The Trustworthiness of Border Ballads* (Blackwood, Edinburgh, 1906).

ence to so-called ' ballad forgeries '—' the world has been more enriched by the contribution than injured by the deception.' [1]

Of the ballads composing the first two volumes of the *Minstrelsy, comparatively* few are from recitation or from tradition, while of the twenty-three historical and romantic ballads in the third volume, published in the following year, no less than seventeen are so ; of the remaining six, the sources of four are not clearly stated, and no information whatever is afforded regarding the other two.

In later editions also many additional ballads are given which were obtained from recitation ; amongst these I include five which had appeared in the first edition—presumably from MSS.—but of which the editor was, he tells us, fortunate enough to recover, since the first publication of his work, more correct copies from recitation.

Amongst the ballads thus obtained are several communicated by Surtees, who mentions details as to how he procured them ; one was ' from the recitation of Anne Douglas, who weeded in his garden ' ; another was ' taken down from the recitation of a woman eighty years of age, mother of one of the miners in Alston-Moor, by the agent of

[1] See ' Essay on Imitations of the Ancient Ballad,' Scott's *Poetical Works* (Cadell's edition), vol. iv. pp. 16-17.

the lead-mines there' ; another was written down by Surtees himself 'from the recitation of Rose Smith, of Bishop Middleham, a woman aged upwards of ninety-one, whose husband's father and two brothers were killed in the affair in 1715.'

The whole world knows that these ballads were composed by Surtees himself, and the whole world, while in fact laughing at the joke, professes to think it was very naughty of him to deceive his worthy and innocent friend. But, as a matter of fact, was Scott deceived ? Can we think so poorly of his discrimination—of him who for years had searched diligently far and wide through the Border land without, so far as we know, ever once obtaining a single ballad or song from recitation, unless, indeed, we except the more than doubtful instance of 'Auld Maitland' ?[1]

I have said nothing with regard to the ballads

[1] I have nowhere come across any definite statement of Sir Walter's that he personally had taken down a song from recitation, or had even heard an original ballad recited, though, perhaps, he leads one to infer this. Lockhart's *Life* gives an account of a Liddesdale farmer singing to Scott the ballad of 'Dick o' the Cow,' but this was not an original ballad, and Scott published it in the *Minstrelsy* from another source. It had been printed at Hawick in 1784, many years before Scott heard it sung, and had doubtless been largely circulated amongst, and well known to, many persons in the district.

The 'Origin of Auld Maitland' forms the subject of a future chapter.

and songs 'given from tradition' or 'taken from tradition,' for I am not very clear as to what is meant by the expression; but since we are apparently intended to understand that they are neither from MSS. nor from recitation, it is to be presumed that in each case the spirit of some old tradition has been endowed with a modern rhythmic body, either by the editor or by the person who communicated it to him.

Now, I do not go so far as to say that we ought not to accept as genuine any of the ballads or stanzas published in the *Minstrelsy* professing to have been obtained from recitation, but I do say that the presumption is in each case against its being genuine, and therefore that not one ought to be accepted without close examination.

Scott professed implicit confidence in the genuineness of the songs supplied to him by his friend, Surtees; is it unreasonable to think that his confidence with regard to other sources may not have been equally misplaced? And what were these sources? I shall not, I hope, be exaggerating in saying that in not more than half a dozen instances are the names of the reciters given. Surtees tells the name of one of his old women; 'Auld Maitland' was recited by another old woman, Mrs. Hogg; the name of the reciter of 'Rookhope Ryde' is also

mentioned; two stanzas of 'Sir Patrick Spens' were from the recitation of the editor's friend, Robert Hamilton, Esq.; 'Cospatrick' and 'Prince Robert' were from the recitation of a lady relative of the editor. The mere fact that names were mentioned in some cases inclines one to fancy they may not have been forthcoming in others.

Occasionally the names of the persons who took down the ballads from the mouths of the reciters are given; thus, the 'battle of Pentland Hills' was taken down by Mr. Livingstone of Airds from the recitation of an old woman living on his estate. 'Sir Hugh le Blonde' was written down by Mr. Burnet of Monboddo from the recitation of an old woman, long in the service of the Arbuthnot family. 'The Demon Lover' was taken down by Wm. Laidlaw. There may be a few other cases, but in the vast majority we are told neither who the reciter nor who the transcriber was.

After this long digression let us now resume our examination into the ballad of the battle of Otterburn, the *Minstrelsy* version of which must, as I have pointed out, be founded, in respect to those points in which it differs from Herd's version, upon the recitations of old persons dwelling in Ettrick Forest.

In his prefatory note to the ballad, Sir Walter

Scott surmises that the ballad published in Percy's *Reliques*, or one similiar to it, modified by national prejudice, must have been current in Scotland during the reign of James VI., for Godscroft (1560-1630) records that 'the Scots song of Otterbourne telleth the time about Lammas; and also the occasion, to take preys out of England; also the dividing armies betwixt the earls of Fife and Douglas, and their several journeys, almost as in the authentic history. It beginneth thus:—

> It fell about the Lammas tide,
> When yeomen win their hay,
> The dochty Douglas 'gan to ride
> In England to take a prey';

and so also does the ballad in the *Reliques* commence with this same stanza; *it* also refers to the season, to the occasion, to the armies of Fife and Douglas, and to their several journeys, or at least to the route followed by Douglas.

Again, Sir Walter writes that his ballad is essentially different from that published in the *Reliques*, and is obviously of Scottish composition. He also informs us that since publishing, in the first edition of the *Minstrelsy*, the version taken from Herd's collection of songs, he had been fortunate enough to obtain two copies from recita-

tion, by which the story is brought out and completed in a manner much more correspondent to the true history. He does not tell us of a single line having been borrowed from Dr. Percy's version.

If, then, we should find, in those portions of the ballad obtained from recitation, stanzas, or lines, strongly resembling others in Dr. Percy's ballad, we may argue, on the one hand, that their presence is what might be fairly expected from Scott's surmise and strengthens belief in the genuineness of the portions obtained from recitation ; and, on the other hand, that their presence is due to the reciter having been acquainted with Dr. Percy's version and to his having borrowed from it, and that, consequently, faith as to the genuineness of this portion is greatly shaken.

The first step towards determining between these antagonistic views is to be clear as to what the differences between Herd's version and the *Minstrelsy* version really are, that is to say to be clear as to what is due to recitation ; the second step will be to compare the result thus obtained with Dr. Percy's version, and in doing so we shall probably find some points of similarity, some of difference, which may be favourable to, or adverse to, one or other of the lines of argument.

The chief points of difference, in so far as the

narrative is concerned, between Herd's version and Scott's consist in the latter mentioning, while the former does not (1) Douglas's advance to Newcastle ; (2) his personal combat there with Percy ; (3) his acceptance of a challenge to battle at Otterburn ; (4) his dream foreboding death and victory ; (5) his death being due to a personal encounter with Percy on the field of battle—Herd's version assigns Douglas's death to assassination.

These five important points have been obtained, then, through recitation.

Now, if we look at the *Reliques* version, we shall find with reference to (1) that mention *is* made of Douglas's advance to Newcastle ; (2) *no* mention is made of a combat there between Douglas and Percy ; (3) mention *is* made of his acceptance of a challenge to fight a battle at Otterburn and of his retreat there ; (4) *no* mention is made of the dream ; (5) his death is imputed to the same cause, namely, to a personal combat with Percy.

So Dr. Percy's ballad and Sir Walter's stanzas obtained from recitation agree as to Douglas's advance to Newcastle ; but yet, how differently they tell it ! Scott makes Douglas, upon arrival before the walls, ask :

> ' O wha 's the lord of this castle,
> Or wha 's the lady o 't ? '

and Percy replies—

(And O but he spake hie !)
'I am the lord of this castle,
My wife 's the lady gay.'

Douglas answers—

'If thou 'rt the lord of this castle,
Sae weel it pleases me !
For ere I cross the Border fells
The tane of us shall dee.'

In Dr. Percy's version the tale is more simply told :—

To the Newe Castelle the toke the waye,
And thither they cam fulle ryght.

Sir Henry Percy laye at the New Castelle,
I tell you withoutten drede ;
. . . . . .
Sir Harry Percy cam to the walles,
The Skottyshe oste for to se ;
. . . . . .
'If thou hast haryed all Bamborowe shyre,
Thow hast done me grete envye ;
For the trespasse thou hast me done,
The tone of us schall dye.'

To my taste Scott's lines approach the bombastic, and to my ear are wanting in the true old ring ; others, however, may differ as to this, and I quite think that 'taste' and 'ear' are not sure guides to

follow. So far, then, there is nothing, save what is due to a, perhaps, fanciful ear, in favour of either line of argument—that is to say either in favour of the reciters having obtained their stanzas through a knowledge of a genuine old Scotch ballad or in favour of their having obtained them through a knowledge of the ballad published by Dr. Percy in the *Reliques*.

There is, however, one small point which ought not to be entirely passed by unnoticed, it tells somewhat in favour of the latter view.

The words ' The tane of us shall dye ' are common to both versions, but in the one they are spoken by Percy, in the other by Douglas—an inversion which is clearly not due to Dr. Percy, whose ballad was published nearly forty years before the reciters appeared on the scene.

The next point of similarity between the English ballad and the stanzas obtained from recitation is that mentioned at (3).

Of course there is nothing odd in both an English and a Scottish ballad referring to Douglas's movement to Otterburn, but there is something suspicious in their both referring to an incident—the challenge to battle—which was probably purely fanciful and imaginary, and, if we look into the matter closely we shall find additional reasons for suspecting the genuineness of the Scottish version.

In the *Reliques* version we have Percy thus replying to Douglas's ' Where shall I bide thee ? '—

'At Otterborne in the high way,
Ther maist thow well logeed be.
The roe full rekeles ther sche rinnes,
To make the game and glee :
The fawkon and the fesaunt both,
Among the holtes on hee.

Ther maist thow have thy welth at wyll,
Well looged ther maist be.
It shall not be long, or I com the tyll,'
Sayd Syr Harry Percye.

' Ther schall I byde the,' sayd the Dowglas,
' By the fayth of my bodye.'—
' Thether schall I com,' sayd Syr Harry Percy ;
' My trowth I plyght to the.'

Now, in the stanzas said to have been obtained from recitation we find absolutely the same matter, and, more than this, we find almost the same words, dressed into prettier verse, but put into different mouths ! After Percy tells Douglas to go to Otterbourne, it is the latter, not the former, who remarks on the plentifulness of the game ; again, the lines composing the last stanza just quoted are pitchforked about in a very curious manner—the first and the third change places, and the fourth is transferred from the mouth of Percy into that of Douglas !

Again, in the *Reliques* we read, with reference to Douglas, that

> He took his logeyng at Oterborne
> . . . . . .
> And ther he pyght his standard dowyn.

In the *Minstrelsy* the same matter is more picturesquely depicted :

> They lighted high on Otterbourne,
> Upon the bent sae brown ;
> They lighted high on Otterbourne,
> And threw their pallions down.

Again, the following two lines in the *Reliques* version—

> And syne he warned hys men to goo
> To chose ther geldyngs gresse—

are represented by the following in the *Minstrelsy* version :

> And he that had a bonny boy,
> Sent out his horse to grass.

Though ' grass ' is almost the only word the couplets have in common, they are practically identical. The expression ' bonnie boy ' is taken from Herd's version.

It is more than extraordinary that a detail so trivial as sending horses to grass should have been recorded both by old English MSS. and by persons

residing, many centuries after the occurrence, at the head of Ettrick Forest.

It would be mere childishness to pretend to think that these similarities, of which the only differences are due to slight verbal alterations, or to inversion, or to the touch of an artistic hand, are only what might fairly be expected, and that they strengthen belief in the genuineness of the stanzas obtained from recitation. That they are in truth due to the composer having been acquainted with Dr. Percy's ballad surely no honest thinking man can doubt.

It would be unfair, however, not to point out one small matter which may be said to tell the other way. In the *Minstrelsy* version, Percy, after telling Douglas to go to Otterbourne, says,

> 'And if I come not ere three dayis end,
> A fause knight ca' ye me,'

to which Douglas replies,

> 'And if you come not at three dayis end,
> A fause lord I 'll ca' thee.'

In the *Reliques* version no time is specified, no suggestion made of either knight proving false; since, then, neither the words nor the idea are borrowed from the *Reliques*, the presence of the lines may be said to argue in favour of the genuineness of

the verses. The argument would be sound were there not another alternative—the verses may be of modern fabrication, a suggestion which applies also to all the stanzas in the *Minstrelsy* version having no counterpart in either of the other two versions.

There remains one other point to be remarked on—and the remark I am about to make is applicable to other stanzas than those which we are now considering. I refer to the beauty of some of the lines in the *Minstrelsy* version and to the satirical tone in one of the stanzas. Beauty is certainly not a common attribute of genuine old ballads, nor is satire, at all events of the refined nature, found here.

To Percy's suggestion that Douglas should await him at Otterbourne, the latter replies :

> ' The Otterbourne 's a bonnie burn ;
> 'Tis pleasant there to be ;
> But there is nought at Otterbourne,
> To feed my men and me.
>
> The deer rins wild on hill and dale,
> The birds fly wild from tree to tree ;
> But there is neither bread nor kale,
> To fend my men and me.'

The last point of similarity between the story obtained from recitation and that given in the *Reliques* lies in Douglas's death being ascribed in both to the result of a hand-to-hand fight with

Percy. Even the words are very similar; in the *Reliques* we have—

The Percy and the Dowglas mette,
That ether of other was fayne;
They schapped together, whyll that the swette,
With swords of fyne Collayne.

The stanza in the *Minstrelsy* version is practically the same, except that for the last line we have

And the blood ran down like rain,

which words are in fact taken from the couplet immediately following the above quoted stanza in the *Reliques*, which runs thus:

Tyll the bloode from ther bassonets ranne,
As the roke [1] doth in the rayne.

Again, the *Reliques* version refers to swords 'sharp and long' that 'sore can byte,' and it relates that Percy 'smote the Dowglas at the swordes length, That he felle to the grounde.' So in Scott's version we read—

But Percy with his good broad sword,
That could so *sharply wound*,
Has wounded Douglas on the brow,
Till he fell to the ground.[2]

[1] Rock.

[2] Surely the composer of these stanzas in the *Minstrelsy* must have been studying Richesource, Professor of 'Plagianism,' an art 'which consists in giving a new order to the parts, changing the

The only important difference is that the *Reliques* version makes no reference to the story, told in the *Minstrelsy*, of Douglas having forgotten to put on his helmet before going into the field. National vanity, I fear, required an explanation of how it happened that a Douglas should have been slain by a Percy, and this was obtained by borrowing lines, from Herd's version, relating to another matter altogether, namely, that of the assassination !

We must now consider the main points of *difference* —(2) and (4)—between the story obtained from recitation and that given in the *Reliques*.

We see that the former relates, while the latter does not, that a personal encounter took place at Newcastle between Douglas and Percy, in which the latter was worsted.

This appears to be in accordance with history, and Sir Walter refers to it, in his prefatory note, thus :

---

phrases, the words, etc. An orator, for instance, having said that a plenipotentiary should possess three qualities—probity, capacity, and courage ; the plagiarist, on the contrary, may employ courage, capacity, and probity. This is only for a general rule, for it is too simple to practise frequently. To render the part perfect we must make it more complex by changing the whole of the expressions. The plagiarist in place of courage will put force, constancy, or vigour. For probity he may say religion, virtue, or sincerity. Instead of capacity he may substitute erudition, ability, or science. Or he may disguise the whole by saying that the plenipotentiary should be firm, virtuous, and able.'—(*Curiosities of Literature*, by I. Disraeli, Esq., vol. ii. p. 221, 9th edition.)

'In a skirmish before the walls Percy's lance with the pennon, or guidon, attached to it, was taken by Douglas—as most authors affirm, in a personal encounter betwixt the heroes.' Nothing is more likely than that the incident should have been introduced into a Scottish ballad, omitted from an English one. But 'omission' is not quite the right word to apply to its non-appearance in the latter—there was no place for it there, it would have been inconsistent with the courtesy, therein related, of Percy having provided refreshments to Douglas and the Scots. The two stories are in fact opposed to each other, and the one, that told in the *Minstrelsy*, is in accordance with history, the other is not.

Now, that this extremely valuable portion of an ancient Scottish historical ballad amending the history related by an English ballad obtained from ancient MSS., should have sprung to light, centuries after the former had been lost, through the recitation of persons living in the wilds of Ettrick Forest, is a fact so remarkable, so interesting to historians, to antiquarians, to lovers of lore generally, that one would have expected more than ordinary care to have been taken to authenticate the manner of its discovery; yet we are not told, either in the *Minstrelsy* or in any of Scott's works or writings, who the reciters were, who the transcribers were.

The stanzas in the *Minstrelsy* referring to the occurrence are as follows (they come immediately after Douglas's words to Percy : ' For, ere I cross the Border fells, The tane of us shall dee) :—

He took a lang spear in his hand,
Shod with the metal free,
And for to meet the Douglas there,
He rode right furiouslie.

But O how pale his lady looked,
Frae aff the castle wa',
When down before the Scottish spear,
She saw proud Percy fa'.

' Had we twa been upon the green,
And never an eye to see,
I wad hae had you, flesh and fell ;
But your sword shall gae wi' me.'

Can any one believe that these stanzas are really ancient and have come down orally through many generations ?

We now come to the tradition of the dream, obtained through recitation, which has been inserted into the *Minstrelsy* version in lieu of the tradition, given in Herd's stanzas, regarding Douglas's assassination by one of his own men. It has been introduced in a somewhat curious manner.

It will be remembered that, in the *Reliques* version, when Douglas is warned of the approach of the

English, he at first doubts the truth of the report, but subsequently orders his men to be aroused. This is perfectly natural.

Again, in Herd's version, Douglas rejoices at the news brought to him and promises to reward the messenger, adding that he will hang him if it is not true. This is also an excellent picture of how a hot, high-spirited man is likely to have received such news.

But what have we in the *Minstrelsy* version? Douglas, when the news is brought to him, flies into a passion, tells the bearer of it he is a liar, and then—relates his 'dreary dream'! This is not what one would expect to find in an old heroic ballad.

Again, after Douglas has been wounded by Percy,

> . . . he called on his little foot-page,
> And said—'Run speedilie,
> And fetch my ain dear sister's son,
> Sir Hugh Montgomery.'
>
> 'My nephew good,' the Douglas said,
> 'What recks the death of ane!
> Last night I dreamed a dreary dream,
> And I ken the day 's thy ain.
>
> My wound is deep; I fain would sleep;
> Take thou the vanguard of the three,
> And hide me by the bracken bush
> That grows on yonder lilye lee.

O bury me by the bracken bush,
Beneath the blooming brier,
Let never living mortal ken,
That a kindly Scot lies here.'

He lifted up that noble lord,
Wi' the saut tears in his ee;
He hid him in the bracken bush,
That his merrie-men might not see.

Since none of these beautiful lines, save those I have marked, nor the thoughts expressed, are in Herd's version, we are perforce required to profess belief in their having been obtained through recitation; but can we? I can detect not a note of antiquity in them, and the sentiment which may, perhaps, be to the taste of modern times is hardly of the kind met with in old ballads.

It seems curious that Scott, the antiquary, should have preferred to accept as the genuinely old story that of the dream to that of the assassination. Though the former is in accordance with history—inasmuch as Godscroft records that Douglas, when lying mortally wounded, spoke of an old prophecy that a dead man should gain a field—so also is the latter; it, too, is recorded by Godscroft, and surely there can be no question that the original ballad is more likely to have recorded it than the former, that is to say is more likely to have recorded the *manner*

of the hero's death than a few *words of his* relating to a dream, for, it must be remembered, ballad-makers were rarely poets ; had he been so in this instance, he might doubtless have preferred the prophetic dream to the ugly murder, but, otherwise, he would never have allowed himself to be led away from a simple relation of the facts. Now, Scott was above all things a poet, far more so than he was an antiquary, and this may possibly explain why he rejected the murder and accepted the dream.

But the dream-story did not suffice for a Scottish ballad of the Battle of Otterburn ; to complete this, it was essential that the death of their leader should be related, and that, too, in a heroic manner. Most fortunately Ettrick Forest was able to supply what was needful ; most fortunately, also, the stanzas drawn from that bounteous source were found to be in accordance, not with Scottish history, not with Scottish tradition, but with the ballad printed in the *Reliques* from ancient English MSS. !

With reference to the assassination story, Sir Walter Scott writes, in his prefatory note to the ballad in the *Minstrelsy*, that ' it seems to have no foundation but the common desire of assigning some remote and extraordinary cause for the death of a great man.' But, an even more common desire

exists, particularly with poets, to assign to their heroes a death more glorious than Fate in fact gave to them, and this, I cannot but think, may have been one of the influences which inclined Scott to follow the English ballad rather than the Scottish tradition.

If Scott's view as to how the story arose be sound, it affords of course some grounds for thinking that Herd's stanza relating the murder may have been composed in ancient days when the desire for assigning extraordinary causes for the deaths of great men prevailed. The stanza is as follows :—

> The boy 's taen out his little penknife,
> That hanget low down by his gare,
> And he gae Earl Douglas a deadly wound,
> Alack ! a deep wound and a sare.

But against this is the suspicious fact that the first couplet is common to many ballads which had been published long before Herd's collection saw the light,[1] and it is impossible, for me at all events, to believe that these two lines could have belonged to the original ballad of Otterburn.

In connection with this subject I may point out that the two stanzas immediately preceding the above are also to be found in ballads published prior

[1] See 'Glasgerion,' 'Lord Thomas and Fair Elinor,' both in Dr. Percy's collection ; also 'The Jew's Daughter' and 'The Bonnie Lass o' Lochryan' in Herd's collection.

to the appearance of Herd's *Songs*. The stanzas run thus—

If this be true, my little boy,
And it be troth that thou tells me,
The brawest bower in Otterburn
This day shall be thy morning fee.

But if it be false, my little boy,
But and a lie that thou tells me,
On the highest tree that 's in Otterburn
With my awin hands I 'll hing thee hie.

In the ballad entitled 'Little Musgrave and Lady Barnard,' published in Percy's *Reliques* and the composition of which is assigned by Ritson to the time of Edward VI. or Queen Elizabeth, we have the lines :—

If this be true, thou little tiny page,
This thing thou tell's to me,
. . . . . .
But if it be a lye, thou little tiny page,
This thing thou tell'st to me,
On the highest tree in Bucklesford Bury,
There hanged shalt thou be.

Again, in 'Sir Aldingar' (Percy's *Reliques*) we have :—

If this be true, thou Aldingar,
The tyding thou tellest to me,
Then will I make thee a rich, rich knight,
Rich both of gold and fee.

But if it be false, Sir Aldingar,
As God never grant it be!
Thy body, I sweare by the holye rood,
Shall hing on the gallows tree.

It is somewhat the fashion amongst writers on ballad literature to hold the convenient theory that no significance need be attached to the recurrence in different ballads of similar passages; these they look upon as the ballad-makers' stock-in-trade, or as 'commonplaces' equivalent to idiomatic phrases in language. Though I think this view requires very considerable qualification, I do not intend to discuss the question here; it will suffice for my present purpose to point out that, since three out of Herd's fourteen stanzas are composed chiefly of 'commonplaces,' the value of that version in a historic, literary, or antiquarian sense is very considerably diminished.

In short, in my opinion there is almost as little reason to believe that Herd's stanzas relating to the assassination are ancient as to believe that those obtained in Ettrick Forest from recitation regarding the dream are so.

I have now concluded the task I set myself in the opening sentence of this chapter; I have considered every point I can think of at all bearing upon the question as to whether the ballad of the Battle of

Otterburn, published in the third and later editions of the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, has a just claim to be looked upon as the genuine old Scottish ballad, and the conclusions arrived at on each are adverse to it; taken together, these constitute an overwhelming argument in favour of the view that it consists partly of stanzas from Percy's *Reliques*, which have undergone emendations calculated to disguise the source from which they came, partly of stanzas of modern fabrication, and partly of a few stanzas and lines from Herd's version.

That there was in fact, however, an old Scotch ballad on Otterburn, there can, I think, be no doubt, and further, I think, with a little diligence it will be possible to find a sufficiency of material to allow of the reconstruction of a version, probably not very dissimilar to the original. To do this will be the aim of the following paper.

NUMBER II

ON THE SCOTTISH VERSION OF THE BALLAD OF THE BATTLE OF OTTERBURN

(*Continued*)

ON THE SCOTTISH VERSION OF THE BALLAD OF THE BATTLE OF OTTERBURN

(*Continued*)

That a Scottish ballad of the Battle of Otterburn existed prior to the time of Hume of Godscroft (1560-1630) is surely unquestionable, since he not only referred to it but even quoted the stanza with which it opened and the sense of some others. It may, no doubt, be said that as this stanza is identical with the first stanza of the so-called English version, acquired by Sir R. Cotton (1570-1631) and published in Percy's *Reliques*, he may have obtained his knowledge from that source ; but this argument is really untenable, and I think it will be admitted to be so by all who take the trouble to read this paper, the main purport of which is to prove that important portions of the old Scotch ballad have been embodied in the English ballads of Chevy-Chase and Otterburn.[1]

It may be convenient to the reader if I were to

[1] This ballad is given in full at the end of this chapter.

state briefly the general drift of my argument, which, I fear, may be found somewhat interlaced. In the first place I endeavour to show that the English ballads above mentioned are not nearly so old as Dr. Percy seems to think in his *Reliques of English Poetry*—that is to say that they were not composed, or compiled, until many generations after the battle of Otterburn. My next step is to prove that both ballads contain stanzas of apparently Scottish origin, and that these, or at all events the greater number of them, clearly refer to the battle of Otterburn. If my argument is sound, it follows of course that the Scottish ballad from which these stanzas have been taken must have been older than either of the English ballads.

Dr. Percy thinks that the ballad of the Battle of Otterburn, which he published in the *Reliques*, is of as early a date as that of Chevy-Chase, if not earlier, arguing that such ' may be inferred from the minute circumstances with which the story is related, many of which are recorded in no chronicle, and were probably preserved in the memory of old people.' It is really amusing to note how eagerly ballad-collectors invoke the memory of old people and ignore the possible ingenuity of others ; but, accepting Dr. Percy's inference as sound, let us see what he says regarding the date of composition

of the ballad of Chevy-Chase. He tells us that Hearne printed it in 1719 from a MS. copy to which 'is subjoined the name of the author, Rychard Sheale; whom Hearne has so little judgment as to suppose to be the same as a R. Sheale, who was living in 1588.' Percy's reasons for disagreeing on this point with Hearne are that 'the language and idiom' of the ballad show it to be the production of an earlier poet, and that 'the style and orthography incline him to place the poem not lower than the time of Henry VI.' So we are asked to believe in the existence of an earlier poet of the same, not very common, name. Now, even if the language, idiom, style and orthography do resemble those of a period long anterior to that in which R. Sheale lived, there is no reason why he should not have composed the ballad and have imitated the style, etc., of the age to which the subject referred; he would thus have been doing merely what many later poets have done, differing from many of them only in honestly putting his name to his work. There is also a possibility—and not an unlikely possibility—that he may have been acquainted with an old version and transcribed it with such emendations as might have appeared desirable, as has also been so frequently done in later days by other collectors and authors of ballads. The language, the idiom, the style and orthography

would, of course, have been carefully retained. It is really impossible to rely upon these characteristics to guide us to a safe conclusion as to the period in which a ballad was composed; even Dr. Percy appears to admit this, for when he finally fixes upon Henry VI.'s reign, in preference to earlier reigns, as the period of its composition, he is influenced not by these characteristics, but by the presence of certain anachronisms forbidding an earlier date to be assigned. O blessed anachronisms! if it were not for them we should doubtless have been told that the language, idiom, style and orthography clearly prove the ballad of Chevy-Chase to have been written in the time of Henry IV., and that of the Battle of Otterburn perhaps even earlier—in Richard II.'s time.

Dr. Percy mentions one other reason for disagreeing with Hearne, namely, that 'It (the ballad of Chevy-Chase) is expressly mentioned among some very ancient songs in an old book intituled, *The Complaint of Scotland* (1549), under the title of the *Huntis of Chevet*, where the two following lines are also quoted:

> The Perssee and the Mongumrye mette,
> That day, that day, that gentil day:

Which, though not quite the same as they stand in

the ballad, yet differ not more than might be owing to the author's quoting from memory.'

Let us see how these lines 'stand in the ballad.' The words

That day, that day, that *dredfull* day,

form the first line of the last stanza of the first fytte, and the words,

At last the *Duglas* and the Persé met,

form the first line of the seventh stanza of the second fytte. The two lines in the ballad have nothing whatever to do with each other, yet Dr. Percy links them together and then connects them with the lines in *The Complaint of Scotland*. Again, in the list of songs enumerated in this work (see *Literary History of Scotland*, p. 221) we find that 'The Hunts of Cheviot,' 'The Percy and Montgomery met,' and 'That day, that day, that gentle day' are separate entries; they are the titles of distinct songs which have no more connection with each other than with the songs which intervene between them on the list, or which precede or follow them![1]

[1] Since writing the above I have examined the passage in *The Complaynt of Scotland* (edited by J. H. Murray, 1872), and it ought in fairness to be said that there is no absolute certainty whether the lines 'The Percy and Montgomery met' and 'That day, that day, that gentil day' form one couplet or are the titles of two songs. In the list, the names of the songs follow each other in

Such are the reasons which have caused Dr. Percy to be so severe on Hearne for identifying the writer of the MS. of 'Chevy-Chase' with an individual who was alive in 1588, and in my opinion they are extremely feeble.

We must now see whether anything can be said in favour of the view that 'Chevy-Chase' was not written until long after the time assigned by Dr. Percy.

He draws attention to several anachronisms. We read in the ballad that

> Word is commyn to lovely London,
> Till the fourth Harry our King,

and also that

> Word is come to Edenborrowe,
> To Jamy the Scottish King.

But no King James set foot in Edinburgh or in

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lines, not columns, and are sometimes separated only by ommas; consequently a doubt occasionally arises as to where the name of one song ends and the other begins. The editor appears to agree with the author of *A Literary History of Scotland* that, in this instance, the lines indicate two songs, since both agree as to the total number of songs named. Possibly they were influenced to form this opinion by the absurdity of describing as 'gentle' the day on which a Percy and a Montgomery met.

But even assuming their view to be wrong, and that in fact the two lines formed a couplet, there is absolutely no reason to connect them with the 'Huntis of Cheviot,' nor, of course, with the Otterburn ballad. This latter is not mentioned in the list.

Scotland until the year 1424, that is not until two years after the commencement of the reign of Henry VI. ! Dr. Percy accordingly admits that the ballad must have been written after this date, but, nevertheless, he implies that it was composed about this period. Now, it is almost inconceivable that so outrageous an anachronism could have been made by an educated man had he lived anywhere near this period ; surely the probability is greater that it was perpetrated by a writer of the sixteenth century, such as Sheale, than by a writer of the first half of the fifteenth century.

Let us return to the Otterburn ballad. In Dr. Percy's note to the ballad, he remarks that 'Although the battle was fought in Richard II.'s time, the song is evidently of later date, as appears from the poet's quoting the chronicles in Pt. ii. ver. 26.' It may be interesting to pursue the line of thought here suggested and inquire to what chronicles the poet was probably referring.

What English chronicles can be named as having been published between 1388—the date of the battle —and 1424 ? I pretend to no knowledge of the history of English literature and cannot name one ; but assuming any to have been written, it seems most improbable for the ballad-maker to have appealed to them with reference to an incident of

quite recent occurrence. The appeal implies that the authority was ancient, and we may infer therefrom that the ballad was not written until long after 1424.

John Harding and Douglas of Glastonbury, who flourished during the latter part of the fifteenth century, and Fabyan, who died in 1512, wrote *Chronicles of England*, but, even assuming they referred to Otterburn, no one writing before the middle of the sixteenth century is likely to have referred to them as ancient authorities.

Froissart's *Chronicles* were written only a few years after the battle, but the writer of the ballad would not have referred his readers, or hearers, to a work in a foreign tongue. But after Lord Berners had published his translation—which he did in 1523—they might indeed well have been appealed to as being ancient, unimpeachable, and of common knowledge.

Moreover, it should be noticed that the appeal was in support of the accuracy of the statements that Percy's force numbered 'But nyne thowzand, ther was no moo,' and that 'Forty thowsande Skottes and fowre That day fowght them agayne.' Well, Froissart gives Percy's strength on leaving Newcastle for Otterburn as six hundred spears and upwards of eight thousand infantry, and the total strength of the Scottish forces that entered England as twelve

hundred spears and forty thousand other men.[1] In another stanza in the ballad, the strength of the Scots is put at forty thousand.

There is, then, *some* ground for asserting that the stanza containing these statements was not composed and that the MS. of the *Reliques* version of the ballad of the Battle of Otterburn was not written until after the appearance, in 1523, of the translation of Froissart's *Chronicles*, and, in this case, there would be nothing improbable in Hearne's statement that the writer of the Chevy-Chase MS. was alive in 1588—assuming, of course, the accuracy of Dr. Percy's suggestion that the Chevy-Chase ballad was not written until after the other.

No further appeal is made to the *Chronicles*, and I can see nothing in the ballad to give rise to the thought of its having been based on them, *i.e.* on the Froissart *Chronicles*. Except as regards the movement of the Earl of Fife to the west Borders, the accounts given by the *Chronicles* and by the ballad are peculiarly different; the former relate that the force under Douglas marched from Zedon [2] direct to Durham, ravaged that county, and *fell back* to

[1] In his account of the battle, however, Froissart estimates the strength of the Scots very differently; he puts it at 'three or four hundred spears, and two thousand stout infantry and archers, all well mounted.'

[2] In a footnote, initialled W. S. (? Walter Scott), in Johnes'

Newcastle; the latter tells us it advanced direct to Newcastle; the former say that when the Scots crossed the Border, the Earl of Northumberland lay at Alnwick, whence he despatched his two sons to Newcastle to hold it, with the ulterior intention of combining forces and so surrounding the invaders; in the latter, though lines 33-40 of the second fit to some extent confirm this, the account as a whole cannot be thought to have been taken from Froissart. Again, whereas Froissart gives very full information

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edition of Froissart, Zedon is identified with Yetholm, but I cannot think this is correct. An advance by Yetholm would have led the Scots far too much to the east of their true line and would almost necessarily have brought them to no great distance of Alnwick Castle, where the Earl of Northumberland lay with a strong force. I do not think there can be much doubt but that Zedon is identical with Southdean, which is still pronounced 'Sooden.' This small hamlet is situated about seven miles south-west of Jedburgh, and Froissart would have correctly described it—as he did—as being in Jed-forest, a description inapplicable to Yetholm. The remains of ancient ecclesiastical buildings are still visible, and on this point again it agrees with Froissart. But to my mind there is yet a stronger reason for believing in the identity of Zedon and Southdean. At Zedon the Scottish leaders determined to divide the army into two divisions, the one, under Douglas, to march direct into England, the other, under the Earl of Fife, to march towards the west frontier. Now, Southdean is the spot whence the most likely route for troops moving to the west frontier diverges from the direct route into England, over the Carter. The former is that which, in much later times, was followed, though in the opposite direction, by one of the wings of Lord Dacre's army in his great raid of November 1513, and again ten years later by Lord Dacre himself when advancing from Carlisle to take part in the siege of Jedburgh.

regarding the movements of both armies, the ballad confines itself almost entirely to those of the Scots. Lastly, Froissart mentions the deaths of three Scots, namely Douglas, his squire, David Campbell, and Sir Robert Hart, and of no English. The ballad, however, mentions seven Scots, other than those named by Froissart, and three English knights as having been killed.

The conclusion I draw is that though the *Reliques* version of the ballad was not written until after the publication of the translation of Froissart, it has not been based to any extent on that work.

But I have pointed out the improbability of other chronicles having existed upon which it could have been based, and consequently there is some ground for thinking it may have been so upon some other authority—possibly some old ballad. Let us then see whether it contains within itself traces of such a ballad.

In *The Complaint of Scotland* (1549 ?) a list is given of old songs 'sung by shepherds,' in which is one entitled 'The hunts of Cheviot,' and it seems highly probable that this was in existence before the sixteenth century.[1] But may we also assume that

[1] The songs named in *The Complaint of Scotland* are therein referred to as 'sweet melodious songs of natural music of the antiquity,' nevertheless some of them cannot have been very old at the time the book was written, for instance, the one commencing

'The hunts of the Cheviot' is but another name for 'Chevy-Chase'? Dr. Percy believes so, but the only reason he gives for his belief—namely, the co-existence in the two ballads of two lines—does not admit of examination, as we have already seen. Professor Child, also, assumes it quite as a matter of course, without, I think, giving any reason at all. I shall, too, make the same assumption, but neither can I give any better reason than that the subject-matter of the English ballad of Chevy-Chase—*if* certain stanzas were eliminated — *might* have formed quite an appropriate theme for a Scottish ballad entitled 'The Hunts of Cheviot.'

Now, Hume of Godscroft tells us that the latter was 'a song distinct from the Scots song made of Otterburn,' and consequently we may assert that such stanzas as relate to the battle of Otterburn, occurring in the modern version of 'Chevy-Chase,' or 'Hunts of Cheviot,' did not belong to the ancient ballad.

Godscroft further tells us that the ballad 'which is commonly sung of the Hunting of Cheviot seemeth indeed poetical, and a mere fiction, perhaps to stir

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'God send the Duke had bidden in France, and De la Bastie had never come home.' We may, however, be tolerably sure that 'The Hunts of Cheviot' and 'Percy and Montgomery met' were correctly described as 'of the antiquity.'

up virtue ; yet a fiction whereof there is no mention in the Scottish or English chronicles.' This description is quite inappropriate to the modern version, many stanzas of which evidently refer to the historic battle of Otterburn. To render it appropriate, we must purge the ballad, as we have it, of all stanzas relating to that battle. Let us now attempt to do this.

Although in the first part, or fit, there is nothing in the least suggestive of the battle of Otterburn, we shall, if we read it carefully, see some reason for thinking that it is not quite as it originally stood. Up to near the end of the fit, the story is told in a perfectly intelligible manner and hangs well together ; but suddenly a change occurs. Douglas had suggested to Percy that, in order to avoid the slaughter necessarily consequent upon a general action, they should settle their dispute by a single-handed combat, or duel, and to this Percy agreed. (See stanzas 18-21.)

But from this point the story ceases to be well connected. After the brave words used one would expect to read of a personal combat between the two ; but not a bit of it ! A certain Squire Wytharynton—the same of whom we are subsequently told in the second fit that ' when both his leggis wear hewyne in to, Yet he knyled and fought on hys

kne '—strikes in, exclaiming that he will not consent to stand by and look on while his captain is fighting ; and then come the last four lines of the fit, lines which seem to have little connection with each other :

> That day, that day, that dredfull day :
> The first fit here I fynde.
> And youe wyll here any mor athe hountyng, athe Chyviat,
> Yet ys ther mor behynde.

In short, the concluding fourteen lines of the first part of the ballad are decidedly disappointing ; nevertheless since they may be ' poetical and a mere fiction,' there is no very sound reason for saying they did not belong to the original version, but, *if they did*, they must surely be no longer in their proper position. Let us then omit them from the first fit and perhaps a more suitable position elsewhere may offer itself.

The second fit opens with an account of a general engagement—the very thing which Douglas and Percy had agreed to prevent—and it is not until the seventh stanza is reached that we read of the two meeting in a hand-to-hand fight.

It will be seen that the first six stanzas may relate either to a matter which is mere fiction or to the historical battle of Otterburn, but I think the probability is in favour of the latter ; this follows

from the second stanza, and more particularly from the third wherein we are told that 'The Douglas parted his host in three,' a statement which is borne out by historical accounts of the battle of Otterburn and which is also in accordance with Herd's version of the ballad :

> Earl Douglas said to Sir Hugh Montgomery,
> Tack thou the vanguard of the *three*.

Again, it is almost impossible to think that, in a fictitious poem, stanzas relating that Earl Douglas 'Yet bides upon the bent' and that he drew up his army in three divisions, should have intervened between the stanza telling of his challenge to Percy and the stanza telling of his fight with him.

It is, of course, clear that these stanzas do not belong to that part of the ballad relating to events subsequent to the duel and Douglas's death.

For these reasons it seems probable that they belong rather to the ballad of the Battle of Otterburn than to that of Chevy-Chase.

Now, if we strike out these six stanzas—as we have already done the concluding stanzas of the first fit—we shall have the seventh, relating how 'the Douglas and the Percy met, Lyk to captains of myght and main,' and the four succeeding ones, giving details of the duel, following, as one would

naturally expect, immediately after those of the first fit recording Percy's acceptance of Douglas's challenge.

We now come to stanza 12 of the second fit, and here again we find another break in the continuity of the story.

The preceding stanzas tell us that Douglas had 'conquered' Percy, but that the latter, on being called upon to surrender, replied—

> 11. 'I told it the beforne,
> That I wolde never yeldyde be
> To no man of a woman born'—

words which are immediately followed by—

> 12. With that ther cam an arrowe hastely
> Forthe off a mightie wane,
> Hit hathe streckene the yerle Duglas
> In at the brest bane.

The latter stanza follows on so badly after the former, that it seems probable that others must have intervened, for the ballad-maker is hardly likely, after recounting the chivalrous duel between Percy and Douglas, to have, thus suddenly and without leading up to the subject in the very least, related an act of what appears to have been despicable treachery. My view is that between these two stanzas should come those relating to Squire Wyth-

arynton, which have been already alluded to as being out of their proper position in the first fit. Although the act would no doubt still read as one of treachery, it would be, if not materially softened, at least somewhat explained. We should then understand from the ballad that when Wytharynton saw Percy about to succumb to Douglas, to remain idly looking on was more than flesh and blood could stand. His words would follow those spoken by Percy in reply to Douglas quite appropriately, and would themselves be followed equally appropriately by the immediately succeeding stanzas.

I must draw attention to a somewhat curious point connected with these verses. We are told, in the first place, that Percy was being worsted by Douglas in a hand-to-hand fight. Now, if the ballad is purely a fictitious one, as Godscroft assures us, it must be admitted that this fiction is more likely to have originated in a Scottish than in an English brain. In the second place, the fiction of a gross act of treachery having been committed by an Englishman is also more likely to have originated in a Scottish brain. Stanzas 22 and 23, fit 1, are, however, clearly English, and have possibly been composed as substitutes for Scottish ones of a different complexion.

Again, supposing the ballad is not fictitious, that

is to say supposing these stanzas really belonged to the ballad of Otterburn and have been pitchforked into Chevy-Chase: well, then again, as before, we have the Scots bragging that Douglas was overcoming Percy, and further we have them explaining away the historic fact of Douglas's death by an act of treachery on the part of the English. An English ballad-maker would never have written thus, even had the circumstances been true, which there is absolutely no reason whatever to think. The conclusion I draw, then, is that whether these stanzas, *i.e.* 9-13, relate to a purely fictitious matter or to the historic battle of Otterburn, they are in either case essentially of Scottish origin.

But, though this may be interesting, it does not help us in the least in our present inquiry, which is not into the origin of the ballad of Chevy-Chase, but into that of the ballad of Otterburn, and, unfortunately, no sufficient grounds exist for asserting that the stanzas in question belonged originally to the latter ballad.

We must now pass on to the consideration of the stanzas which follow the account of Douglas's death.

What would one naturally expect to find in them ?

Two rival forces, longing to be at each other's

throats, had been watching a hand-to-hand combat between their leaders ; an archer of the one force lets fly his arrow at and kills the leader of the other ; an immediate general engagement is certain to have resulted, and therefore it is of such one would expect to read. As a fact, however, the ballad gives no account of a general battle, and the seven stanzas following those above referred to are entirely taken up with the relation of another hand-to-hand fight.

We then come to certain stanzas, 23-27, which surely could not have been composed had there been no previous reference to a general fight, and it consequently seems highly probable that, in the original ballad, some stanzas, relating to a general engagement, may have intervened between Percy's words to the dead Douglas—at stanza 15—and stanza 23.

We must now consider the stanzas which, as a matter of fact, *do* intervene. There are seven (16-22) ; the first four relate a very gallant exploit on the part of a Scottish knight, Sir Hew Montgomery, who kills Percy ; the last three recount the knight's death at the hand of an English archer. Do these belong to the historical ballad of Otterburn ? or to the ballad entitled ' The Percy and the Montgomery met,' mentioned in the *Complaint of Scotland* ? or to the fictitious ballad of Chevy-

Chase ? And, if to the last named, are they not at least based on history, or on ballads relating to the battle of Otterburn ?

Now, were it not for the introduction of Sir Hew Montgomery's name, I should not hesitate to leave them where we find them in the ballad of Chevy-Chase, for nothing would have been more likely than that the composer of this fictitious ballad should have balanced the death of one leader by that of the other, and should have also introduced into it the death of the Scottish knight. It may also be pointed out that these stanzas might well have formed part of an account of the general engagement which, as I have said, probably intervened between stanzas 15 and 23. These considerations point strongly to their having belonged to the original 'Chevy-Chase.'

On the other hand, we cannot get over the broad fact that they record a struggle between Percy and Montgomery, and that there was such a personal struggle at the battle of Otterburn we are told by scraps of old Scotch verse and also by history.[1]

It seems, then, that though these stanzas may quite well have belonged to the original ballad of

[1] Sir Hew Montgomery was killed at the battle of Otterburn. It was not Sir Hew, but his father, Sir John, who 'with his own hands' took Sir Henry Percy prisoner.—(*Douglas Peerage*, under 'Eglinton.')

Chevy-Chase, yet if they did, they must have been borrowed from, or founded upon, some older ballad relating to the battle of Otterburn.

We must now pass on to the five stanzas succeeding stanza 27. In them mention is made of twelve English and Scottish knights who were slain. Now, all of these, with, I think, three exceptions, are mentioned either in history or in the ballad of the Battle of Otterburn as having played a part in that battle; consequently it seems reasonable to say that they belonged in the first instance to that ballad—in which, indeed, almost identical stanzas occur—and have been interpolated into 'Chevy-Chase.' I strike these out, namely stanzas 28-32.

We now come to stanzas 33 and 34. These follow very well after stanza 27 (28-32 being omitted); the former, however, occurs also in the 'Battle of Otterburn,' where it is equally well placed, and therefore we ought, perhaps, to assume that it and also the latter stanza—since the two clearly go together—belong more properly to the older ballad; yet as this is by no means certain I shall not claim them for 'Otterburn.'

With regard to the remaining stanzas of the ballad I can see no sufficient reason for thinking they did not all belong to the original 'Chevy-Chase.' It may, however, be as well for me to explain why I

think so in the case of those stanzas in which reference is made, by name, to Otterburn, for it is only natural to imagine that they must have belonged to the ballad commemorating the battle fought at that place. Moreover, in one stanza mention is made both of 'the hunting in the Cheviot' and of 'the battle of Otterburn,' and it might reasonably be thought that this goes some way to prove that the two ballads were either versions of the same ballad *or* that, if distinct from each other, both referred to the same subject.

At the very commencement of the ballad we are told that Percy formed the intention of hunting in the Cheviots for the purpose of defying the Douglas, and we are given to understand that there was no little audacity in so doing. Now, one cannot conceive why to hunt in the neighbourhood of Otterburn should have been a peculiarly bold act, or one in the least calculated to offend the Douglas. Otterburn is many miles on the English side of the frontier ; it is only some thirty miles from Newcastle, and about the same distance from Alnwick ; it is due south of, and not many miles from, Harbottle. One cannot believe that any Englishman, least of all a Percy, could have imagined he was either doing anything bold in hunting in this district, or that by so doing he was defying the Scots. It would not be a whit

more absurd to say that had Douglas hunted in Teviotdale [1] he would have been boldly defying the House of Percy and the English!

Percy's expressed intention was to hunt in the Cheviots, and Otterburn is not in the Cheviots—at all events it is no more 'in Cheviot the hills so hie' than is Jedburgh. *If* Percy carried out his intention, and *if* he and Douglas fought at Otterburn in Northumberland, it follows necessarily that the former must have retreated from the Cheviots, pursued by the latter, and this is absolutely opposed to the spirit of the song.

But it *would* have been in consonance with the spirit of the song, it *would* have been a bold and defiant act on the part of a Percy to have hunted high up in the hills, more especially on the Scottish side, fully prepared to fight Douglas where he met him.

It seems to me, then, not improbable that the author of the original ballad, when mentioning Otterburn, referred to the place of that name near Morebattle in Kale Water, a district which perhaps was more subject to English raids than any other on the Borders of Scotland. Otterburn is about five miles within the Scottish frontier, and about eight

[1] At this time the strong castles of Roxburgh and Jedburgh in Teviotdale were held by English troops.

or nine from 'High Cheviot,' as the highest hill in the range is locally called.[1]

Again, there is another possibility; the author of 'Chevy-Chase,' with a view to rendering his imaginary tale as realistic as possible, may have borrowed from the older ballad not only the names of his heroes but also the name of the locality in which they were to play their parts, ignorant or careless of the fact that its geographical position rendered it unsuitable to the commencement of his story.

Such are the reasons which make me hesitate before rejecting these stanzas from the ballad of Chevy-Chase and transferring them to that of the Battle of Otterburn.

I have now concluded my examination into the ballad of Chevy-Chase, and I think I have shown fairly good reasons for believing that the *Reliques* version is in fact a compilation of two, or perhaps three, ballads relating to two distinct subjects, and

[1] In Pont's atlas, published by Blaeu in 1654, the name is spelt 'Otleburn.'

It may be worth while to draw attention to one small point somewhat indicative of the battle referred to in 'Chevy-Chase' not being the same as that fought in Northumberland in the year 1388. In 'Chevy-Chase' we read that the battle began 'upon a monnyn day'; in the Otterburn ballad we are told that Douglas 'tooke his logeyng at Otterburn upon a Wedyns-day,' but, of course, we ought not to look for agreement as to dates amongst ballad-makers any more than amongst historians. In the *Minstrelsy* the battle is said to have been fought on the 15th August—a Saturday; Burton's *History of Scotland* gives the date as the 19th—a Wednesday; and Haydn's *Dictionary of Dates* gives the 10th—a Monday.

that consequently Richard Sheale, the writer of the MS., though he may have copied the MSS. of two older ballads, could not possibly have been the author of either.

Since the MS. of 'Chevy-Chase,' or possibly I ought to say, since the old ballads from which the MS. of 'Chevy-Chase' may have been transcribed, are—if my argument is sound—older than the MS. of 'Otterburn,' so must of course also be the stanzas relating to the battle of Otterburn which, I have pointed out, are present in the ballad of Chevy-Chase. The point to be now considered is whether these stanzas, in number eighteen, appear to be of English or of Scottish origin.

As to the first six—namely stanzas 1-6, fit 2—it may be thought that the words 'our English archery'—see stanza 4—imply an English origin, but too much weight ought not to be attached to the one word 'our'; it may be, and in my opinion probably is, an 'emendation.'

Usually we read of 'archers of England' or of 'the English archers,' and of 'spearmen of Scotland' or of 'the Scottish spearmen,' and not of 'our archers' or of 'their spearmen.'

It is curious, too, that in another version of this ballad, given by Professor Child (see Cambridge edition, 1904, page 397), in which the stanza to which I am referring does not occur, the implication that

the verses are of English origin is nevertheless maintained by the substitution of ' our ' for ' the ' in the first line of stanza 1. ' The Ynglishe hade ther bowys yebent ' is altered into ' Our Englyshe,' etc.

It should be noticed also that in these six stanzas the troops are specified as English no less than three times, whereas the Scots are not called Scots once—they are simply ' spearmen ' or ' suar speares.' This is just what one would expect from a Scottish author ; it is not what one would expect of an English author, who would have been more likely to have named the nationality of his enemy's troops than of his own.

Again, the spirit of these stanzas is undoubtedly Scottish ; their meaning is simply that the Scottish spears broke through the English archery.

In my opinion, then, the probability is strongly in favour of these six stanzas being of Scottish origin, and that the word ' our ' has simply been substituted for ' the.'

The next of the eighteen stanzas to be considered are the seven, 16-22. It has already been stated that the first four of these mention a very gallant exploit of a Scottish knight, Sir Hew Montgomery, and the last three tell of his death—a fact confirmed by Scottish records. We may, then, conclude that all these are of Scottish origin.

With regard to stanzas 28-32, I can see no good reason for saying that they owe their origin to one source rather than to the other.

Thus of the eighteen stanzas in 'Chevy-Chase' relating to the battle of Otterburn, thirteen appear to be of Scottish origin and therefore presumably belonged to some old Scottish ballad. I do not reckon stanzas 9-13 which, though clearly of Scottish origin, I have not been able to connect with the battle of Otterburn.

Now, in the *Reliques* version of the ballad of Otterburn are nine stanzas which, for reasons I shall give, appear to have belonged to the old 'Scots song of Otterburn,' mentioned by Godscroft, and which song, we can hardly doubt, must have existed long prior to the MS. of the ballad, which I have shown could not have been written before 1523.[1]

The following are the stanzas I refer to :—

First Fit

I

Yt felle aboght the Lamasse tyde,
Whan husbonds wynn ther haye,
The dowghtye Dowglasse bowynd hym to ryde,
In Ynglond to take a praye.

[1] In addition to these nine stanzas there are several which could be shown to be older than the MS. ; for instance, stanza 39, which is identical with 33 of 'Chevy-Chase.'

2

The yerlle of Fyffe, withoughten stryffe,
He bowynd hym over Sulway :
The grete wolde ever together ryde ;
That rayce they may rue for aye.[1]

3

Over Ottercap hyll they came in,
And so dowyn by Rodeclyffe cragge,
Upon Grene Leyton they lyghted dowyn,
Styrande many a stagge.

4

And boldely brente Northomberlonde,
And haryd many a towyn ;
They dyd owr Ynglysh men grete wrange,
To battell that were not bowyn.

5

Than spake a berne upon the bent,
Of comforte that was not colde,
And sayd, We have brent Northomberlonde,
We have all welth in holde.

6

Now we have haryd all Bamboroweshyre,
All the welth in the worlde have wee ;
I rede we ryde to Newe Castell,
So styll and stalwurthlye.

[1] This line doubtless has reference to the grief of the Earl of Fife and his force in not having shared in the victory at Otterburn.

7

Uppon the morowe, when it was daye,
The standards schone fulle bryght;
To the New Castelle the toke the waye,
And thether they cam fulle ryght.

Stanzas 18 and 19 need not be quoted; they merely relate that Douglas retired from Newcastle to Otterburn, where he pitched his camp.

As regards stanza 1, there can be no question that it belonged to the old Scots song, since Godscroft quoted it as the opening stanza; that the six succeeding stanzas did so also may, perhaps, be inferred from their appearing to be closely connected with, indeed to form a continuation of, stanza 1. There is also another reason for thinking so: Godscroft tells us that the old song mentioned 'the dividing armies between the Earls of Fife and Douglas and their several journeys'; these stanzas, as also stanza 18 and 19, do this.

It may be fairly said that the second couplet of stanza 4 tells against the view that the stanzas are of Scottish origin, but it must be remembered that any stanzas interpolated into an English ballad are certain to have suffered from 'emendation' if, from an English point of view, this should have appeared desirable.

Perhaps it would be too great an assumption to

assert that the thirteen stanzas of Scottish origin in ' Chevy-Chase ' come from the same old ballad as do, in my opinion, these nine—that is to say from the old ' Scots song of Otterburn ' ; but it is tolerably clear that some of them do so, and if others do not, these must surely have belonged to the song entitled ' The Percy and the Montgomery met,' mentioned in the *Complaint of Scotland*, and which very probably related to the same subject.

And now we come to the last point to be considered, namely, whether this old Scots song was the *original* ballad of the Battle of Otterburn.

It will be generally admitted that the original ballad was in all probability composed by the victors, since it is rare, indeed, for the conquered to commemorate defeat. As exceptions to this rule, some songs may no doubt be quoted, but in them the predominating note will, I think, be found to be not of triumph but of woe ; defeat is not described as victory. Thus the ' Flowers of the Forest,' referring to the defeat at Flodden, is a lament, a wail over the fallen ; the lines on the death of Sir John Moore at Corunna were not written to commemorate the withdrawal of our army from Spain, but as a wail over the death of a hero. In his ' Charge of the Light Brigade ' Tennyson strikes perhaps a note of triumph, but it is not of triumph over the enemy so

much as of triumph gained by discipline, by duty, by self-sacrifice.

I must name one exception to the rule that defeat is never joyously acclaimed in verse; of the battle of Sheriffmuir the poet, who appears to have been present, wrote—

> And we ran, and they ran,
> And they ran, and we ran,
> And we ran, and they ran awa', man.

There is, then, very strong reason for the assertion that, if the original ballad of the Battle of Otterburn dates from shortly after the occurrence, it was composed by the victors.

If some one who had never read the *Reliques* version of the ballad were asked to do so and to say whether, in his opinion, it was of Scottish or of English origin, he would probably reply that the first part, or fit, was apparently of the former, since it relates almost exclusively to the Scots, and every individual named, except one, is a Scot. Moreover, if he happened to be acquainted with the history of the period, he would remark that though consistent with it in the main, there was a curious omission of reference to the Scots having overrun Durham, and also to the doings of the force under the Earl of Fife, saving a few words which seem to indicate an omission of stanzas relating to the subject.

As to the second fit, his judgment would be different. He would say that though undoubtedly some of the stanzas might appropriately have belonged to a Scottish ballad, it is on the whole essentially English, and, he would add, untrue to history, for an English defeat reads like an English victory.

He would say that the ballad has the appearance of having been adapted from a Scottish one, but *if* it has not been so, *if* it is truly an original ballad, then it cannot have been composed until long after the period to which it relates, not until all recollection of the true facts had ceased to exist.

Some few readers may exclaim that I have no right to assume that the battle of Otterburn resulted in a Scottish victory, and they may remark that Dr. Percy himself, in his note to the ballad, accepts only hesitatingly the accuracy of the precise and detailed account of the campaign given by Froissart, while he carefully points out that the story is related in the ballad in much the same manner as it is recorded in the English chronicle.

Dr. Percy does not say to what English chronicle he refers, but from a footnote it seems likely that it was to that of Stow or Speed. Now, since the former's great work was not written till towards the end of the sixteenth century, and the latter's not till some years later—about 1614—how can they, or

indeed any English chronicle, be put in the balance against that of Froissart ?

Writing very shortly after the event the latter tells us ' that he was made acquainted with all the particulars of this battle by knights and squires who had been actors in it on each side. There were also, with the English, two valiant knights from the county of Foix, whom I had the good fortune to meet the year after the battle had been fought. . . . On my return from Foix, I met likewise a knight and two squires from Scotland, of the party of the earl Douglas. They knew me again from recollections I brought to their minds of their own country ; for in my youth, I the author of this history, travelled all through Scotland, and was full fifteen days resident with William, earl Douglas, father of earl James, at his castle of Dalkeith. . . . I had my information, therefore, from both parties, who agree that it was the hardest and most obstinate battle that was ever fought.' Every reader of Froissart's account will most assuredly admit that he was a thoroughly impartial and unprejudiced writer. Better evidence than his as to the Scots having obtained a decisive victory is inconceivable ; it cannot be shaken even though all the English chronicles of the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries combined were to witness otherwise.

We must, then, take it as an indisputable fact that the battle of Otterburn was a decisive Scottish victory, crowning a highly successful invasion of the north of England, and consequently we may confidently assert that the original ballad relating to it was a Scottish one.

On this point few will disagree with me, but many, I fear, will refuse to accept my further conclusions, namely, that those stanzas in the English ballads of Chevy-Chase and of Otterburn, which I have shown reason for thinking are of Scottish origin, are, in truth, fragments of the original ballad. But I go even further than this ; there are many stanzas in Dr. Percy's ballad the appearance of which favours neither source more than the other ; I claim these for a Scottish origin, on the following grounds.

It is clear that an English ballad-maker has been possessed of a Scottish ballad and that he has either perverted it to suit his own views or has interpolated some of its stanzas into an English ballad ; but one cannot conceive why he should have wished to introduce Scottish stanzas into an English ballad, and, on the other hand, to pervert a Scottish ballad recording a Scottish victory into an English ballad recording an English victory is intelligible enough. In my opinion, then, we ought to look upon the ballad as a whole as being of Scottish origin ; we

ought to look upon lines which are clearly English as having been grafted upon it; we ought not to think that Scottish stanzas have been grafted upon an English ballad.

With a view to showing clearly the result of my conclusions I have reconstructed the ballad of the Battle of Otterburn on the lines I have indicated, that is to say, I have struck out of Dr. Percy's ballad all stanzas of a purely English origin and interpolated into it those stanzas belonging to Chevy-Chase, which appear to have a Scottish origin and at the same time relate to Otterburn. I do not, of course, mean to imply that the ballad so reconstructed represents the original ballad; there may be much in it that was not in the original; there may be much omitted from it—perhaps some of the Scottish stanzas of 'Chevy-Chase' which do not appear to belong necessarily to the 'Otterburn' ballad; but however remote it may be from the truth, I cannot but think it must be less so than the so-called 'Scottish version' of the *Minstrelsy*.

One word more; if my conclusions are sound, the old 'Scots song of Otterburn' may be quoted as an instance of the historical 'Trustworthiness of Border Ballads'; if they are considered unsound, if the English ballad is held to be the original, the latter must be cited not merely as an instance of un-

trustworthiness, not merely as an instance of inaccuracy, but as an instance of actual perversion of fact.

CHEVY-CHASE

(From *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*)

The First Fit

1

The Persé owt of Northombarlande,
And a vowe to God mayd he,
That he wolde hunte in the mountayns
Off Chyviat within dayes thre,
In the mauger of doughté Dogles,
And all that ever with him be.

2

The fattiste hartes in all Cheviat
He sayd he wold kill, and carry them away:
Be my feth, sayd the dougheti Doglas agayn,
I wyll let that hontyng yf that I may.

3

Then the Persé owt of Bamborowe cam,
With him a myghtye meany;
With fifteen hundrith archares bold;
The wear chosen out of shyars thre.

4

This began on a monday at morn
In Cheviat the hillys so he;
The chyld may rue that ys un-born,
It was the mor pitté.

5

The dryvars thorowe the woodes went
For to reas the dear;
Bomen bickarte uppone the bent
Wit ther browd aras cleare.

6

Then the wyld thorowe the woodes went
On every syde shear;
Grea-hondes thorowe the greves glent
For to kyll thear dear.

7

The beganc in Chyviat the hyls above
Yerly on a monnyn day;
Be that it drewe to the oware off none
A hondrith fat hartes ded ther lay.

8

The blewe a mort uppone the bent,
The semblyd on sydes shear;
To the quyrry then the Persé went
To se the bryttlynge off the deare.

9

He sayd, It was the Duglas promys
This day to meet me hear;
But I wyste he wol faylle verament;
A gret oth the Persé swear.

10

At the laste a squyar of Northombelonde
Lokyde at his hand full ny,
He was war ath the doughetie Doglas comynge:
With him a myghte meany,

11

Both with spear, byll, and brande :
Yt was a myghti sight to se.
Hardyar men both off hart nar hande,
Wear not in Christianté.

12

The wear twenty hondrith spear-men good
Withouten any fayle ;
The wear borne a-long be the watter a Twyde,
Yth bowndes of Tividale.

13

Leave off the brytlyng of the dear, he sayde.
And to your bowys look ye tayk good heed ;
For never sithe ye wear on your mothars borne
Had ye never so mickle need.

14

The dougheti Dogglas on a stede
He rode att his men beforne ;
His armor glytteryde as dyd a glede ;
A bolder barne was never born.

15

Tell me what men ye ar, he says,
Or whos men that ye be :
Who gave youe leave to hunte in this
Chyviat chays in the spyt of me ?

16

The first mane that ever him an answear mayd,
Yt was the good lord Persé :
We wyll not tell the what men we ar, he says,
Nor whos men that we be ;

But we wyll hount hear in this chays
In the spyte of thyne, and of the.

17

The fattiste hartes in all Chyviat
We have kyld, and cast to carry them a-way.
Be my troth, sayd the doughté Doggles agayn,
Ther-for the ton of us shall de this day.

18

Then sayd the doughté Doglas
Unto the lord Persé :
To kyll all thes giltless men,
A-las ! it wear great pitté.

19

But, Persé, thowe art a lord of lande,
I am a yerle callyd within my contré ;
Let all our men uppone a parti stande ;
And do the battell off the and of me.

20

Nowe Cristes cors on his crowne, sayd the lord Persé,
Who-soever ther-to says nay.
Be my troth, doughté Doglas, he says,
Thow shalt never se that day ;

21

Nethar in Ynglonde, Skottlonde, nar France,
Nor for no man of a woman born,
But and fortune be my chance,
I dar met him on man for on.

22

Then bespayke a squyar off Northombarlonde,
Ric. Wytharynton was his nam ;
It shall never be told in Sothe-Ynglonde, he says,
To kyng Herry the fourth for sham.

23

I wat youe byn great lordes twaw,
I am a poor squyar of lande ;
I wyll never se my captayne fyght on a fylde,
And stande my-selffe, and looke on,
But whyll I may my weppone welde,
I wyll not fayl both harte and hande.

24

That day, that day, that dredfull day :
The first fit here I fynde.
And youe wyll here any mor athe hountyng athe
Chyviat,
Yet ys ther mor behynde.

The Second Fit

1

The Ynglishe men hade ther bowys yebent,
Ther hartes were good yenoughe ;
The first of arros that the shote off,
Seven skore spear-men the sloughe.

2

Yet bydys the yerle Doglas uppon the bent,
A captayne good yenoughe,
And that was sene verament,
For he wrought hom both woo and wouche.

3

The Dogglas pertyd his ost in thre,
Lyk a cheffe cheften off pryde,
With suar speares off myghtte tre
The cum in on every syde.

4

Thrughe our Ynglishe archery
Gave many a wounde full wyde;
Many a dougheté the garde to dy,
Which ganyde them no pryde.

5

The Ynglyshe men let thear bowys be,
And pulde owt brandes that wer bright;
It was a hevy syght to se
Bryghtswordes on basnites lyght.

6

Thorowe ryche male, and myne-ye-ple
Many sterne the stroke downe streght;
Many a freyke, that was full free,
Ther undar foot dyd lyght.

7

At last the Duglas and the Persé met,
Lyk to captayns of myght and mayne;
The swapte together tyll the both swat
With swordes, that wear of fyn myllan.

8

Thes worthé freekys for to fyght
Ther-to the wear full fayne,
Tyll the bloode owte off thear basnetes sprente,
As ever dyd heal or rayne.

9

Holde the, Persé, sayd the Doglas,
And i' feth I shall the brynge
Wher thowe shalte have a yerls wagis
Of Jamy our Scottish kynge.

10

Thou shalte have thy ransom fre,
I hight the hear this thinge,
For the manfullyste man yet art thowe,
That ever I conqueryd in filde fightyng.

11

Nay then sayd the lord Persé,
I tolde it the beforne,
That I wolde never yeldyde be
To no man of a woman born.

12

With that there cam an arrow hastely
Forthe off a mightie wane,
Hit hathe strekene the yerle Duglas
In at the brest bane.

13

Thoroue lyvar and longs bathe
The sharp arrowe ys gane,
That never after in all his lyffe days,
He spake mo words but ane,
That was, Fyghte ye, my merry men, whyllys ye may,
For my lyff days ben gan.

14

The Persé leanyde on his brande,
And sawe the Duglas de ;
He tooke the dede man be the hande,
And sayd, Wo ys me for the !

15

To have savyde thy lyffe I wold have pertyd with
My landes for years thre,
For a better man of hart, nare of hande
Was not in all the north countré.

16

Off all that se a Skottishe knyght,
Was callyd Sir Hewe the Mongon-byrry,
He sawe the Duglas to the deth was dyght ;
He spendyd a spear a trusti tre ;

17

He rod uppon a corsiare
Throughe a hondrith archery ;
He never styntyde, nar never blane,
Tyll he came to the good lord Persé.

18

He set uppone the lord Persé
A dynte, that was full soare ;
With a suar spear of a myghte tre
Clean thorow the body he the Persé bore.

19

Athe tothar syde, that a man myght se,
A large cloth yard and mare :
Towe bettar captayns wear nat in Christianté,
Then that day slain wear ther.

20

An archar off Northomberlonde
Say slean was the lord Persé,
He bare a bende-bow in his hande,
Was made off trusti tre :

21

An arrow, that a cloth yarde was lang,
To th'hard stele halyde he ;
A dynt, that was both sad and soar,
He sat on Sir Hewe the Mongon-byrry.

22

The dynt yt was both sad and sar,
That he of Mongon-byrry sete ;
The swane-fethars, that his arrowe bar,
With his hart blood the wear wete.

23

Ther was never a freake wone foot wolde fle,
But still in stour dyd stand,
Heawyng on yche othar, whyll the myght dre,
With many a bal-ful brande.

24

This battell begane in Chyviat
An owar before the none,
And when even-song bell was rang
The battell was nat half done.

25

The tooke on on ethar hand
Be the lyght off the mone ;
Many hade no strenght for to stande,
In Chyviat the hyllys aboun.

26

Of fifteen hondrith archars of Ynglonde
Went away but fifti and thre ;
Of twenty hondrith spear-men of Skotlonde,
But even five and fifti :

27

But all wear slayne Cheviat within :
The hade no strengthe to stand on hie ;
The chylde may rue that ys un-borne,
It was the mor pitté.

28

Thear was slayne with the lord Persé
Sir John of Agerstone,
Sir Roger the hinde Hartly,
Sir Wyllyam the bolde Hearone.

29

Sir Jorg the worthé Lovele
A knyght of great renowen,
Sir Raff the ryche Rugbé
With dyntes wear beaten dowene.

30

For Wetharryngton my harte was wo,
That ever he slayne shulde be ;
For when both his leggis wear hewyne in to,
Yet he knyled and fought on hys kne.

31

There was slayne with the dougheti Douglas
Sir Hewe the Mongon-byrry,
Sir Davye Lwdale, that worthé was,
His sistars son was he :

32

Sir Charles a Murré, in that place,
That never a foot wolde fle ;
Sir Hewe Maxwell, a lorde he was,
With the Duglas dyd he dey.

33

So on the morrowe the mayde them byears
Off byrch, and hasell so gray ;
Many wedous with wepyng tears,
Cam to fach ther makys a-way.

34

Tivydale may carpe off care,
Northombarlond may mayk grat mone,
For towe such captayns, as slayne wear thear,
On the march perti shall never be none.

35

Word ys commen to Edden-burrowe,
To Jamy the Skottishe kyng,
That dougheti Duglas, the lyff-tenant of the Merches,
He lay slean Chyviot with-in.

36

His handdes dyd he weal and wryng,
He sayd, Alas, and woe ys me !
Such another captayn Skotland within,
He sayd, y-seth shuld never be.

37

Worde ys commyn to lovely Londone
Till the fourth Harry our kyng,
That lord Persé, leyff-tennante of the Merchis,
He lay slayne Chyviat within.

38

God have merci on his soll, sayd kyng Harry,
Good lord, yf thy will it be !
I have a hondrith captayns in Ynglonde, he sayd,
As good as ever was hee :
But Persé, and I brook my lyffe,
Thy deth well quyte shall be.

39

As our noble kyng made his a-vowe,
Lyke a noble prince of renowen,
For the deth of the lord Persé,
He dyd the battel of Hombyll-down :

40

Where syx and thritté Skottish knyghtes
On a day wear beaten down :
Glendale glytteryde on ther armor bryght,
Over castell, towar and town.

41

This was the hontynge off the Cheviat ;
That tear began this spurn :
Old men that knowen the grownde well yenoughe,
Call it the Battell of Otterburn.

42

At Otterburn began this spurne
Uppon a monnyn day :
Ther was the doughté Doglas slean,
The Persé never went away.

43

Ther was never a tym on the march partes
Sen the Doglas and the Persé met,
But yt was marvele, and the redde blude ronne not,
As the reane doys in the street.

44

Jhesue Christ our balys bete,
And to the blys us brynge!
Thus was the hountynge of the Chevyat:
God send us all goog ending!

RECONSTRUCTED BALLAD OF THE BATTLE OF OTTERBURN

1

It fell abought the Lamasse tyde,
Whan husbandes wynne their haye,
The doughtye Dowglasse bowynd hym to ryde,
In Ynglond to take a praye.

2

The yerle of Fyffe, wythowghten stryffe,
He bowynd hym over Sulway;
The grete wolde ever to-gether ryde;
That raysse they may rewe for aye.

3

Over Hoppertope hyll they cam in,
And so down by Rodelyffe crage;
Upon Grene Lynton they lyghted dowyn,
Stryande many a stage.

4

They have taken Northumberland,
And sae they hae the north shire,
And the Otter Dale, they hae burnt it hale,
And set it a' into fire.

5

Than spake a berne vpon the bent,
Of comfort that was not colde,
And sayd, We haue brente Northomberlond,
We haue all welth in holde.

6

Now we haue haryed all Bamborowe schyre,
All the welth in the worlde haue wee,
I rede we ryde to Newe Castell,
So styll and stalworthlye.

7

Vpon the morowe, when it was day,
The standerds schone full bryght;
To the Newe Castell the toke the waye,
And thether they cam full ryght.

8

Syr Henry Perssy laye at the New Castell,
I tell you wythowtten drede;
He had byn a march-man all hys dayes,
And kepte Barwyke vpon Twede.

9

To the Newe Castell when they cam,
The Skottes they eryde on hyght,
'Syr Hary Perssy, and thou byste within,
Com to the fylde, and fyght.

10

For we haue brente Northomberlonde,
Thy erytage good and ryght,
And syne my logeyng I haue take
Wyth my brande dubbyd many a knyght.'

11

Syr Harry Perssy cam to the walles,
The Skottyssch oste for to se,
And sayd, And thou hast brente Northomberlond,
Full sore it rewyth me.

12

Yf thou hast haryed all Bamborowe schyre,
Thou hast done me grete envye;
For the trespasse thow hast me done,
The tone of vs schall dye.

13

'Where schall I byde the?' sayd the Dowglas,
'Or where wylte thow com to me?'
'At Otterborne, in the hygh way,
Ther mast thow well logeed be.

14

The roo full rekeles ther sche rinnes,
To make the game and glee:
The fawkon and the fesaunt both,
Amonge the holtes on hee.

15

Ther maist thow have thy welth at wyll,
Well looged ther maist be.
Yt schall not be long, or I com the tyll,'
Sayd Syr Harry Percye.

16

Ther schall I byde the, sayd the Dowglas,
By the fayth of my bodye.
Thether schall I com, sayd Syr Harry Percy ;
My trowth I plyght to the.

17

A pype of wyne he gave them over the walles,
For soth, as I yow saye :
Ther he mayd the Dowglas drynke,
And all hys oste that daye.

18

The Dowglas turnyd him homewarde agayne,
For soth withowghten naye,
He tooke his logeyng at Oterborne
Uppon a Wedyns-day :

19

And ther he pyght hys standerd dowyn,
Hys gettyng more and lesse,
And syne he warned hys men to goo
To chose ther geldyngs gresse.

20

A Skottysshe knyght hoved upon the bent,
A waehe I dare well saye :
So was he ware on the noble Percy
In the dawnynge of the daye.

21

He pryeked to his pavyleon dore,
As faste as he myght ronne,
Awaken, Dowglas, cryed the knyght,
For hys love, that syttes yn trone.

22

Awaken, Dowglas, cryed the knyght,
For thow maist waken wyth wynne :
Yender have I spyed the prowde Percy,
And seven standardes wyth hym.

23

Nay by my trowth, the Douglas sayed,
It ys but a fayned taylle :
He durst not loke on my bred banner,
For all Ynglonde so haylle.

24

Was I not yesterdaye at the Newe Castell,
That stonds so fayre on Tyne ?
For all the men the Percy hade,
He cowde not garre me ones to dyne.

25

He stepped owt at hys pavelyon dore,
To loke and it were lesse ;
Araye yow, lordyngs, one and all,
For here bygynnes no peysse.

26

The yerle of Mentaye, thow arte my eme,
The forwarde I gyve to the :
The yerlle of Huntlay cawte and kene,
He schall wyth the be.

27

The lorde of Bowghan in armure bryght
On the other hand he schall be :
Lorde Jhonstone, and lorde Maxwell,
They to schall be with me.

28

Swynton, fayre fylde upon your pryde !
To batell make yow bowen :
Syr Davy Scotte, Syr Walter Stewarde,
Syr Jhon of Agurstone.

29

The Ynglishe men hade ther bowys yebent,
Ther hartes were good yenoughe ;
The first of arros that the shote off,
Seven skore spear-men the sloughe.

30

Yet bydys the yerle Doglas uppon the bent,
A captayne good yenoughe,
And that was sene verament,
For he wrought hom both woo and wouche.

31

The Dogglas pertyd his oste in thre,
Lyk a cheffe cheften off pryde ;
With suar speares off myghtte tre,
The cum in on every syde ;

32

Thrughe the Ynglyshe archery
Gave many a wounde fulle wyde ;
Many a doughete the garde to dy,
Which ganyde them no pryde.

33

The Ynglyshe men let thear bowys be,
And pulde owt brandes that wer bright ;
It was a hevy syght to se
Bryght swordes on basnites lyght.

34

Thorowe ryche male, and myne-ye-ple
Many sterne the stroke downe streght:
Many a freyke, that was full free,
Ther undar foot dyd lyght.

35

Ther was no freke that ther wolde flye,
But styffely in stowre can stond,
Ychone hewyng on other whyll they myght drye,
Wyth many a bayllefull bronde.

36

Ther was slayne upon the Skottes syde,
For soth and sertenly,
Syr James a Dowglas ther was slayne,
That daye that he cowde dye.

37

Ther was slayne with the dougheti Douglas
Sir Hewe the Mongon-byrry,
Sir Davye Lwdale, that worthè was,
His sistar's son was he:

38

Sir Charles a Murrè, in that place,
That never a foot wolde fle;
Sir Hewe Maxwell, a lorde he was,
With the Duglas dyd he dey.

39

The yerlle Mentaye of he was slayne,
Grysely groned uppon the growynd;
Syr Davy Scotte, Syr Walter Steward,
Syr John of Agurstonne.

40

Ther was slayne upon the Skottes syde,
For soth as I yow saye,
. . . . . .
. . . . . .

41

Ther was slayne upon the Ynglysshe syde,
For soth and sertenlye,
A gentell knyght, Sir John Fitz-hughe,
Yt was the more petye.

42

Syr James Harebotell ther was slayne
For hym ther hartes were sore,
The gentyll Lovelle ther was slayne,
That the Pereyes standerd bore.

43

Ther was slayne with the lord Persè
Sir John of Agerstone,
Sir Roger the hinde Hartly,
Sir Wyllyam the bolde Hearone.

44

Sir Jorg the worthe Lovele,
A knyght of great renowen,
Sir Raff the ryche Rugbè
With dyntes wear beaten dowene.

45

Ther was slayne uppon the Ynglyssh perte,
For soth as I yow saye ;
Of nyne thowsand Ynglyssh men
Fyve hondert cam awaye.

46

Thys fraye bygan at Otterborne,
Bytwene the nyghte and the day :
Ther the Dowglas lost hys lyfe,
And the Percy was lede awaye.

NUMBER III

KINMONT WILLIE

KINMONT WILLIE

'In "Kinmont Willie" Scott has been suspected of making the whole ballad,' so writes Mr. Andrew Lang,[1] but without mentioning the names of the sceptics or the grounds for their suspicions.

On the other hand, belief in the essential genuineness of the ballad has been professed by many of our great authorities on ballad literature.

Professor Child, in his *English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, draws attention to Sir Walter Scott's statement that the original ballad had been 'much mangled by reciters,' and that 'some conjectural emendations were absolutely necessary to render it intelligible,' and he further adds that 'probably a great deal more emendation was done than Scott's observation would indicate. One would like, for example, to see stanzas 10-12 and 31 in their mangled condition.' From this, we must understand, as well as from the fact that he included the ballad in his great collection—and in the case of 'Auld Maitland,' he did not do so, on the ground, presumably, that he

[1] Introduction to *Literary Forgeries*, p. xxiv.

believed it to be spurious—that this great authority had no solid reasons for doubting the substantial correctness of Sir Walter's assertions.

Professor Veitch was, of course, a firm believer.

Mr. Walter Riddell Carre, a very well-known and valued authority on Border subjects, referred to the ballad as 'one of the finest in all the literature of the Border,'[1] and he surely would not have written thus had he doubted its genuineness.

Sir George Douglas, another Border authority, also appears to be without suspicions. He compares the narrative given in the ballad with that in the English State Papers, and observes small discrepancies; but these, he adds, 'are in the nature of perfectly legitimate poetic ornament, and on the whole, after comparing the flights of the Scottish poet with the statement of the English official, one remains impressed not by the license but by the closeness to fact in essentials of the former.'[2] Sir George clearly takes the ballad seriously, for his remarks are of interest only if the ballad is genuine. Indeed, the very closeness with which the ballad is said to adhere to fact may, in some minds, arouse suspicion.

Again, Mr. J. H. Millar refers to the ballad as a

[1] *Border Memories*, by W. R. Carre, 1876, p. 368.
[2] *A History of Roxburgh*, etc., by Sir G. Douglas, Bart, p. 332.

typical specimen of its class, and as 'saturated with the "folk-spirit"'; and further he mentions it, together with other ballads, as exemplifying 'the magnificent simplicity with which the effects are achieved, the astonishing directness with which the minstrel hastens to his mark, the masterly touch with which the deepest chords of emotion in the human breast are swept.'[1] The author, like Sir George Douglas, is evidently sincere, and writes in a sense he would never have done had he had the faintest suspicion of the ballad's genuineness.

Mr. T. F. Henderson, in his edition of the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (1902), says nothing to make it appear that he believes Sir Walter invented the ballad. He writes: 'The originals of Scott's version have not been preserved; but Scott practically admits that he has partly rewritten it; and this is quite evident without any confession of his. When the deeds of his ancestors were concerned, it was impossible for him to resist the temptation to employ some of his own minstrel art on their behalf—even to the extent of inventing completely new stanzas, as, for example, stanza xxxi. of this ballad. Stanzas ix.-xii. must likewise be credited mainly to Scott; and there are numerous

[1] *A Literary History of Scotland*, by J. H. Millar (1903), pp. 191-193.

other touches throughout the ballad which also betray the more finished art of the modern versifier.'[1] In all this, Mr. Henderson practically says no more than did Professor Child. The only construction to be put upon his words is that he believes in Sir Walter having really discovered an original ballad, or scraps of an original ballad, which he worked up into the form we know.

The last great writer I shall name as expressing belief is Mr. A. Lang. He writes: 'That there really was a ballad appears, I think, from reminiscences of it to be found in Scott of Satchells' rhyming History (1688). Certainly, too, Sir Walter never composed *this* stanza:

> He has called him forty marchmen bauld,
> I trow they were of his ain name,
> Except Sir Gilbert Elliot, called
> The laird of Stobs, I mean the same.'[2]

Now, I cannot admit, without some sound reason being given—and Mr. Lang gives none—that reminiscences of an old ballad are to be found in Satchells' work; nor can I admit that it is impossible for Sir Walter to have composed the stanza quoted. Has Mr. Lang forgotten his own words: 'The business of the forger is to avoid being too poetical'?[3]

[1] Vol. ii. p. 57.
[2] *Literary Forgeries*, Introduction, p. xxiv.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 266.

Whether Mr. Lang has, or has not, reasons for the above assertions, it is evident his faith in the existence of an old ballad is not founded solely on Sir Walter's words, and it occurs to me that possibly he may consider the meaning of these words somewhat obscure. I may as well give them at length.

'This ballad is preserved by tradition on the west borders, but much mangled by reciters, so that some conjectured emendations have been absolutely necessary to render it intelligible. In particular, the "Eden" has been substituted for the Eske, the latter name being inconsistent with topography.'[1]

Now, we invariably find in the prefatory notes to the original ballads in the *Minstrelsy* that they are said sometimes to have been 'obtained from tradition,' sometimes 'from recitation,' and sometimes 'partly from tradition, partly from recitation'; the two sources are treated as being perfectly distinct. Sir Walter evidently assigned different meanings to the two terms. But such is not the case here, and consequently there is—to my mind at all events—a want of clearness in the words, a shadow of a doubt as to their meaning. But we ought not to attempt to read between the lines here,

[1] Remarks regarding this substitution of names are made at p. 124.

any more than in any other case, and we must, I fear, take Sir Walter's meaning to be that which any ordinary reader would give to his words, namely, that an old ballad in truth existed in his time and that individuals were living who still recited it.

Notwithstanding the views of the distinguished writers I have named, I must rank myself amongst those to whom Mr. Lang has referred as suspecting Scott of having made the whole ballad.

I believe that Sir Walter wrote the whole from beginning to end, and that it is in fact a clever and extremely beautiful paraphrase of Satchells' rhymes. I think that the cause for the narrative at times diverging from that recorded by the rhymes is due, partly to artistic considerations, partly to the author having wished to bring it more or less into conformity with history.

I shall now endeavour to explain the reasons which have forced me, very much against my own inclination and prejudice, to adopt this opinion.

In Sir Walter Scott's prefatory note to the ballad, after referring to a few facts mentioned by Satchells regarding the raid, he writes :—

'In many things, Satchells agrees with the ballads current in his time, from which in all probability he derived most of his information as to past events,

and from which he sometimes pirates whole verses, as noticed in the annotations upon the Raid of the Reidswire. In the present instance, he mentions the prisoner's large spurs (alluding to fetters) and some other little incidents noticed in the ballad, which were therefore probably well known in his days.'

Mr. Lang also, like Sir Walter, assumes that an old —or ought we not to say 'a new' ?—ballad existed in Satchells' time ; he writes, 'If Scott, as Professor Child suspects, wrote verse 31,[1] then he took the idea from Satchells, whereas Satchells more probably took it from the ballad.' *The* ballad ! what ballad ?

But as Satchells was born in 1612 or 1613—say only seventeen years after the exploit, when the incidents, as Sir Walter remarks, must have been well known—he is much less likely to have derived his information from 'ballads current in his time '— and really we do not know that there were any such —than from persons engaged in the exploit itself— his father was one—or who were alive at the time, and believed themselves to be fully acquainted with the particulars. The probability of Satchells having obtained his information from a hypothetical ballad is really quite an inadmissible argument.

[1] The ballad will be found at the end of this chapter.

But, in support of his view, Scott points out that Satchells mentions the prisoner's large spurs 'and some other little incidents noticed in the ballad.' *Some other little incidents* indeed! Why, almost every one mentioned in the ballad is referred to by Satchells! No doubt in the former they are habited in such pretty poetic garments as to be sometimes almost unrecognisable, they are made more heroic, more thrilling; a dark, foggy night is converted into one of thunder and storm, a river 'in no great rage' becomes 'great and mickle of spait,' etc. etc. But there is something much more remarkable than this; the incidents are related in almost precisely the same sequence!

Now, no two individuals ever gave independent accounts of the same series of occurrences, whether relating to military exploits or to anything else, and arranged the particulars in the same order. When we find narratives so arranged, we may be certain one has been composed with the aid of the other.

In view of what we are told by Sir Walter himself as to emendations being necessary in order that the ballad might be rendered intelligible, we may surely conclude that it is not arranged in precisely the same manner as was the 'original' ballad. It follows, then, that Satchells' arrangement—which is identical

with Scott's—was not adopted from the 'original,' and hence it also follows that Scott must have adopted his arrangement from Satchells.

At the end of this chapter the ballad and the rhymes will be found placed in juxtaposition, and it will be seen how regularly they pass from the same theme to the same theme, though differing no doubt in detail. One can imagine the rhymes lying before the author of the ballad as he was composing it; one can picture him now reading a few lines, then converting them into verse, now wading through pages of tedious matter, then transferring the spirit into a few brilliant stanzas, and finally linking the whole together with others created purely by his own imagination, inspired, perhaps, by ideas latent in the rhymes.

It will now, I think, be interesting to consider some points concerning which the ballad and the rhymes are very dissimilar; fortunately they are not very numerous.

The first to be noticed is in the relation of the cause and manner of Kinmont's capture by the English.

Satchells tells us that Lord Scroope made a sudden dash by night into Scotland and captured Kinmont in revenge for a highly successful raid which the latter had shortly before made into England. There

is not the faintest suggestion of treachery or of truce having been broken.

History, however, relates the matter differently. The Deputy-Wardens of the two Marches had held a meeting to settle various matters in dispute at Kershope-foot. (Kershope burn forms the boundary between the two kingdoms, and flows into the river Liddell from the east. Below Kershope-foot the Liddell forms the frontier until it joins the Esk.) The days on which such meetings were held were said to be 'days of truce,' since all persons attending them were exempt from the liability of arrest, and, in order that individuals might return safely to their homes without fear of molestation, the truce remained good until sunrise next day. On the present occasion, after the meeting was over, the English Deputy, Sakelde, was returning homewards down the Liddell when he saw Kinmont on the other, that is the Scottish, side of the river, also on his way home. Sakelde despatched a body of horsemen to pursue him; he was captured, taken to Carlisle, and there handed over to Lord Scroope, the English Warden. It was a treacherous act and a breach of Border law.

Well, the ballad follows, not the account given by Satchells, which presumably was in accordance with popular belief at the time he wrote, but the historical

account. This, in itself, is somewhat suspicious; yet, if a ballad in truth existed before Satchells' time, there should be no cause for surprise in its relating the actual facts; but, then, what happens to the theory that Satchells derived his information from 'the ballad'?

I may be asked to give my reasons for the assertion that the ballad follows the historical account.

This is shown first of all in its reference to Sakelde, who is mentioned in history[1] as the English official who seized Kinmont; he is not named by Satchells. Again, the word 'fause' applied so frequently to him, and the statement in stanza 11 that Kinmont was taken 'against the truce of Border tide,' which clearly refers to the non-observance of 'the day of truce,' imply treachery on Sakelde's part; history depicts the capture as a deed of treachery, Satchells does not. Again, the reference to the 'Liddell rack' is consistent with Kinmont having been seized in the manner related by history; it is inconsistent with Satchells' account, since Kinmont's residence was on the right bank of the Esk, and had he been captured there, the Liddell would not have been crossed at all.

Again, the ballad, in agreement with history,

[1] I refer to the account of the Carlisle raid given in the MS. published by Sir W. Scott in the prefatory note to the ballad.

refers to the raiders having been pursued by a part of the garrison after the release of Kinmont; Satchells says distinctly there was no pursuit.

There can surely be little doubt that the author of the ballad wished to make it approximate to history, and a curious little slip in the endeavour to do so indicates that this endeavour was not made until after the publication of Satchells' rhymes.

It has already been pointed out that history relates how Kinmont was taken prisoner by Sakelde when the latter was returning home from the meeting with the Scottish Deputy-Warden, that is to say, then, by day. Now, although the ballad adheres in the main to the historical account, it nevertheless makes the inconsistent statement that the capture was made 'between the hours of night and day,' that is to say in the early hours of the morning, a statement which is in accordance with Satchells' words that it occurred 'before daylight came.' It is evident that the balladist, or at all events the author of stanza 8 in which this occurs, borrowed it from Satchells.

It may be as well here to draw attention to the fact that two theories exist to account for similarities between the ballad and the rhymes; one is that Satchells got his information from the balladist; the other—which I hold—is that the balladist got

his information from Satchells—to which information he has supplemented his knowledge of facts derived from history. If the former view be correct, then it follows that the differences which I have brought to notice are due to Satchells having perverted truth into fiction—and for no conceivable object ; if the latter is true, then it follows that the balladist, or the author of the stanzas concerned, converted fiction into truth—and the object for so doing is transparent. As to which hypothesis is the more probable there cannot surely be much question.

I shall now make some remarks on individual stanzas, or series of stanzas.

It is unnecessary to draw attention to the fact that many lines in the ballad are very similar to some of the rhymes—indeed in stanza 2 they are almost identical. No reader can fail to note this for himself if he will look at pages 132 and 133, where the ballad and the rhymes are placed opposite to each other ; and even in instances where the similarity is not so marked, as in stanzas 6-8, he will surely see how closely connected they are in sense.

However, there are a great number of stanzas which have no counterpart in the rhymes ; this is due sometimes to the narrative diverging from that

told in the rhymes to that related by history, as for instance stanzas 3 and 4; sometimes it is due to the necessity the author has been under of introducing a new stanza in order to lead up to a subject mentioned in the rhymes and which he intends to utilise, *e.g.* stanza 5; sometimes it appears to be due to the author's sense of the impossibility of adhering closely to the prosaic facts in the rhymes without detriment to the artistic beauty with which he wished to endow his ballad, *e.g.* stanzas 9-15, relating to Buccleuch's anger on hearing of Kinmont's capture, and again stanzas 21-25, relating to false rumours put about by Buccleuch to account for his entering England. With regard to these, I need only point out that the rhymes are of a stamp which one might expect from 'An old Soldier, and no Scholar, And one that can write nane, But just the letters of his name,' whereas the stanzas are of a stamp which could have been produced by only one of our greatest balladists; no mere 'ballad-maker' wrote them; they were written by an artist of a higher rank than the author of 'Dick o' the Cow,' or of 'Hobbie Noble,' or of 'Jock o' the Syde,' or of the original version of 'Jamie Telfer,' or of the 'Battle of Philiphaugh.' They were written by a poet, and no Border poet can be named who flourished between the time of the raid to Carlisle and that of the publication of

Satchells' work. By whom, then, can these stanzas have been written ?

Let us now consider one or two stanzas in detail, and, in the first place, stanzas 16 and 17.

The rhymes tell us that Buccleuch called together some of his kinsmen—and also Gilbert Elliot who ' was not of his name '—for the purpose of obtaining their advice. Later on Satchells repeats that Buccleuch assembled his kinsmen—' These gentlemen were all Scotts, except Gilbert Elliot of the Stobs '—but this time it was for action.

Now, in the ballad we find the same repetition, but it is for emphasis only—the men are not summoned for two distinct purposes, but for one.

Again, Satchells makes two references, separated from each other by some fifty or sixty lines, to Gilbert Elliot ; in the first, we read, ' He was not of his name,' which phraseology is adopted in stanza 16 ; in the second reference, Gilbert Elliot is defined as ' of the Stobs,' and this is again adopted in the same stanza. Surely, then, it is clear that this stanza has been compiled by some one who had been studying Satchells' rhymes ; it is also clear that the first couplet of stanza 17, too, is based on Satchells' rhymes, and consequently we may assert that these two stanzas were written at one and the same time, and by the hand that wrote the remainder of stanza

17. There can, I think, be little doubt as to who wrote them and the succeeding stanza 18.

Let us glance backward from stanza 16. The very line preceding it is in truth nothing more than Satchells' words—'That he must into Carlisle ride, and fetch the Kinmont out'—poetically expressed. So this stanza too has been written by some one versed in Satchells.

Going still further back, we find that stanzas 10-12 are ascribed to Sir Walter Scott by Professor Child, by Mr. Henderson, and by Mr. Lang; Mr. Lang also believes Scott wrote stanza 9, but why he does not include stanza 8 is to me incomprehensible; and why all three authorities stop at stanza 12 and do not include stanzas 13-14 is equally so. They give no reasons for the opinion they have formed, and I can only presume it is based on the style of writing; but is the style of stanzas 13-14 so markedly different to that of stanzas 10-12, as to entitle us to say they were composed by different authors? I do not think so. I should like to ask Mr. Henderson and Mr. Lang two questions: firstly, why do you think Scott wrote stanzas 10-12? and, secondly, why do you think he did not write stanzas 13-14—or, indeed, any other stanza in the whole ballad?

Let us now look at stanzas 26 and 27. The first thought that occurs to one is that the cart has been

put before the horse, for the stanza recording the steps taken by Buccleuch on reaching the river comes *after* that relating how it was crossed. Both stanzas are clearly based on Satchells' rhymes, yet in these the incidents are arranged in their proper order. How is this ? The reason is simply that the rhymes refer to two different rivers, firstly, to 'the Esk, her furious streams,' secondly, to the Eden. The author of the stanzas, however, was of necessity obliged to make them refer to only one river, and that the Eden ; this was due to his having, when paraphrasing the antecedent lines into stanzas 18-20, slightly altered their sense.

According to Satchells, when Buccleuch reached Woodhouselee (on the Scottish side of the Esk), he halted to allow the wrights to do their work, and he then put abroad false reports as to his intentions. When 'the day was past,' he commenced the eight-mile march to Carlisle and forthwith crossed the river—'the water was strong,' says Satchells, and when indeed is the Esk otherwise ?—then he pushed on across the muir to the Eden. Upon reaching this river, he detailed a part of his force to halt, presumably with the object of protecting his line of retreat. He and the rest of his men then crossed to the left bank.

But the author of the stanzas makes no halt at the Woodhouselee; the Esk is not mentioned; Buccleuch's force finds itself at once in England. It is *after* they are in England that the false reports are spread. Consequently when the author, before whom I have imagined Satchells' rhymes were lying, came to the lines which I have placed opposite stanzas 26 and 27 on pages 142-145, he was obliged to treat them as if they referred to but one river, the Eden. This explains Scott's words that for topographical reasons he had substituted the 'Eden' for the 'Esk'; to do so was most certainly necessary for his ballad. We can understand also how it happens that in the ballad the *Eden* is described as 'great and mickle of spait,' which words, in truth, merely paraphrase Satchells' apposite description of the *Esk*. As a matter of fact the Eden does not appear to have been very high at the time—the Scots could not have crossed it had it been so. The MS. account given in Scott's prefatory note says no more than that the river was 'weel thick,' and Satchells refers to it as 'in no great rage.'

I must now pass on to stanza 31, which the three great authorities I have referred to credit to Sir Walter Scott, without, however, mentioning the grounds for so doing. I entirely agree with them, but shall venture to give my reasons. In this

instance ' style ' has no weight with me ; has it with them ?

In the first place, I may observe that this stanza affords the only instance in which the ballad does not adhere to the sequence of events followed by Satchells—minor details excepted. This fact, however, does not weaken the argument I have put forward on the point, since really no one can believe that, *if* an original ballad ever existed, the stanza in question could have been in its present position.

The incident here related is, of course, identical with that told us by Satchells ; but, whereas when the latter mentions that ' The Wardens Trumpets did most sweetly sound,' and again ' the Trumpets sounded, Come if ye dare,' he is referring to a time *after* Kinmont had been released, *after* the critical moment had passed ; the ballad refers to the moment immediately following that in which the English sentry had been crept up to and surprised, *preceding* the forcing of an entry into the prison, *preceding* the crisis ! The old soldier, Satchells, who may be sneered at for his rhymes, would never have made such a glaring blunder as this ! nor would an ancient ballad-maker.

Satchells says the trumpets sounded, ' Come if ye dare.' Now, no tune of this title exists, or ever did—so far as is now known ; but there is, and was, an

old Liddesdale tune entitled ' Wha daur meddle wi' me ? ' which may, quite possibly, have been the very tune sounded on this occasion, since the party was chiefly composed of Liddesdale men.[1] But then, why did not Satchells refer to it by its ordinary name ? My answer is that Satchells, having incorrectly stated that the whole party consisted of Scotts, may have realised the absurdity of their trumpets sounding a purely Liddesdale tune, the gathering song of a rival clan,[2] and that he consequently made a slight alteration in the name, though not in the sense. But then again, it will be asked, if the view as to the ballad having been founded on Satchells' rhymes be true, why did not the author adhere to the name therein given, ' Come if ye dare ' ? For two reasons : firstly, because he may not have wished to follow the words of Satchells too closely—it would, indeed, have been suspicious had the ballad and the rhymes both used one and the same *fanciful* appellation ! Secondly, for the same reason that induced him to bring the narrative into agreement with history—to give it an appearance of being

[1] It was to this same tune that centuries later, on the occasion of a false report that a French army of invasion had landed, the Liddesdale men marched into Hawick on their way to the rendezvous.

[2] The refrain of the song is,

My name is little Jock Elliot,
And wha daur meddle wi' me ?

genuine. It should be observed, too, that although the tune was in fact quite an inappropriate one for the Scotts to have sounded, Sir Walter endeavoured to give his readers the opposite impression. In a footnote to the stanza he tells us that 'Wha daur meddle wi' me?' is the name of an old Border tune or slogan. This is quite true, but is nevertheless misleading. It makes the reader believe that this Border tune is one likely to have been sounded by the Border Scotts.

In *The Trustworthiness of Border Ballads* I have made some conjectures as to why Sir Walter Scott did not include this song, which is generally believed to have originated from the combat between an Elliot and Lord Bothwell in the time of Queen Mary, and is therefore of some historical interest, in his great collection of Border ballads. To these conjectures I must now add one other: possibly he may not have wished to draw attention to the fact that the mention, in the ballad of 'Kinmont Willie,' of the Elliot Slogan having been sounded would tell against the probability of the assertion, in that ballad, that the exploit to Carlisle was carried out solely by Scotts—with one exception. However, whatever his reason may have been it is a curious fact that the only occasion on which he referred to this old song was when it had been put—in my opinion by him-

self—into the trumpets of his own clan! How can we pretend not to connect the hand which did this, with the hand which, in the *Minstrelsy* version of the ballad of 'Jamie Telfer,' attributed to an Elliot the dishonourable conduct which in an older ballad had been charged—unjustly, I think—to a Scott?

Stanzas 40 and 41 are worth looking at. Stanzas 37-38 and the first couplet of 39 follow the story told by Satchells, but at this point there is a divergence. According to the rhymes, Kinmont, immediately upon his being brought down the ladder, is mounted upon a horse, and the party returns 'with speed' into Scotland by the way they had come. After riding for a considerable distance, Kinmont complained of the pain caused by his fetters which he likened to large spurs.

According to the ballad, however, after Kinmont has come down the ladder, he still sticks to Red Rowan, 'the starkest man in Teviotdale,' and consequently the joke about the spurs—a perfectly natural one as told by Satchells—becomes somewhat far-fetched. To bring it in, Kinmont is made to ride off, not on horseback, but on Red Rowan's back! No old 'ballad-makar' made these lines, for no such would ever have indulged in this flight of fancy. Can any one seriously profess to believe that these stanzas were written before Satchells' rhymes?

And how about stanzas 35-36 and 43-46? The two former are not required for the narrative, have no counterpart in the rhymes, and appear to have been inserted solely for the purpose of embellishment. Similar lines occur in 'Jock o' the Syde,' relating to his escape from Newcastle jail—

'Sleeps thou, wakes thou, Jock o' the Syde,
Or art thou weary of thy thrall?'

Jock answers thus wi' dolefu' tone;
'Aft, aft I wake—I seldom sleep.'

With regard to the latter four, namely stanzas 43-46, if the ballad was, as I assert, founded on the rhymes, some such stanzas as these were absolutely necessary in order to bring the ballad to a termination, for in Satchells' rhymes the narrative does not end with Buccleuch's return into Scotland. In writing them, the author must surely have had in his mind the concluding stanzas of 'Jock o' the Syde,' or of 'Archie o' Ca'field,' or of both; it is impossible not to notice the general resemblance between Buccleuch's challenge to Scroope, after the Scots had safely re-crossed to the right bank of the Eden—'In fair Scotland come visit me!'—and Archie o' Ca'field's challenge to the English leader, after the Scots had re-crossed the Annan—'Come

thro', come thro', lieutenant Gordon! Come thro' and drink some wine wi' me!'

I have now completed my task; I have given the reasons which have influenced me in forming the opinion that Sir Walter Scott not merely made more emendations than he had indicated, as suggested by Professor Child, not merely invented some whole stanzas and touched up others, as stated by Mr. Henderson and admitted by Mr. Lang, but that he wrote the whole ballad from beginning to end. To him only is the merit! Let us deceive ourselves no longer; let us no longer refer to this ballad as evidence of the poetic genius of our sturdy old ancestors, or think of it as being impregnated with the 'folk-spirit' of a bygone day. As literature, let us frankly acknowledge that it belongs to the early nineteenth century, not to the early seventeenth.

THE BALLAD AND SCOT OF SATCHELLS' RHYMES PLACED IN JUXTAPOSITION TO SHOW HOW CLOSELY THEY AGREE IN REGARD TO THE MAIN FACTS AND TO THE ORDER IN WHICH THESE ARE NARRATED.

SATCHELLS.

After relating that the inhabitants of Northumberland had complained to Lord Scroup, the English Warden, regarding a raid lately made by Kinmont Willie, Satchells proceeds thus :—

Kinmont's Capture.

The Lord Scroup heard their complaint,
And bade them go home and no more lament,
For before the Sun did rise or set
He should be reveng'd on Kinment :
Anone he charg'd the Trumpeters, they should sound
Booty-sadle,
Just at that time the Moon was in her prime
He needed no Torch-light :
Lord Scroup he did to Scotland come,
Took Kinment the self same night :
If he had had but ten men more, that had been as stout
as he,
Lord Scroup had not the Kinment tane with all his
Company ;

Kinmont is taken to Carlisle.

The Ballad.

Kinmont's Capture.

1

O have ye na heard o' the fause Sakeld ?
O have ye na heard o' the keen lord Scroup ?
How they hae ta'en bauld Kinmont Willie,
On Haribee to hang him up ?

2

Had Willie had but twenty men,
But twenty men as stout as he,
Fause Sakelde had never the Kinmont ta'en,
Wi' eight score in his cumpanie.

Kinmont is taken to Carlisle.

3

They band his legs beneath the steed,
They tied his hands behind his back !
They guarded him fivesome on each side.
And they brought him ower the Liddel-rack.

But Kinment being Prisoner, lord Scroup he had him
tane,
In Carlisle Castle he him laid, in irons and fetters strong.

Lord Scroup and Kinmont bandy words.

Then scornfully lord Scroup did say,
In this Castle thou must ly,
Before thou goest away, thou must
Even take thy leave of me ;
He meant that he should suffer death before he went
away ;
By the Cross of my Sword, says Willie then,
I 'le take my leave of thee,
Before I go away, whether I live or die.

News of Kinmont's capture is brought to Buccleuch.

These News came furth to bold Buckcleugh,
Lord Warden at that time,
How lord Scroup, Carlisles Governour,
Had Kinment Willie Tane ;

4

They led him thro' the Liddel-rack,
And also thro' the Carlisle sands;
They brought him to Carlisle Castell,
To be at my lord Scroope's commands.

Lord Scroup and Kinmont bandy words.

5

'My hands are tied, but my tongue is free,
And whae will dare this deed avow?
Or answer by the Border law?
Or answer to the bauld Buccleuch?'

6

'Now, haud thy tongue, thou rank reiver!
There 's never a Scot shall set thee free;
Before ye cross my castle yate,
I trow ye shall take farewell o' me.'

7

'Fear naye that, my lord,' quo' Willie:
'By the faith o' my body, lord Scroope,' he said,
'I never yet lodged in a hostelrie,
But I paid my lawing before I gaed.'

News of Kinmont's capture is brought to Buccleuch.

8

Now word is gane to the bauld keeper,
In Branksome Ha', where that he lay,
That lord Scroope has ta'en the Kinmont Willie,
Between the hours of night and day.

Buccleuch's Anger.

Is it that way Buckcleugh did say,
Lord Scroup must understand,
That he has not only done me wrong,
But my Soveraign James of Scotland ;
My Soveraign Lord King of Scotland
Thinks not his Cousin Queen,
Will offer to invade his Land,
Without leave asked and given ;
Thou stole into my Masters Land,
Which is within my Command,
And in a plundering hostile way,
I 'le let thee understand ;
Before Day-light came thou stole a man,
And like a Thief thou run away ;
This Letter came to Lord Scroups hand,
Which from Buckcleugh was sent,
Charging him then to release Kinment,
Or else he should repent ;

. . . . . .

This Message by a Drummer sent,
To the Governour Lord Scroup ;
A frivolous answer he returned,
Which made bold Buckcleugh to doubt,
That he must into Carlisle ride,
And fetch the Kinment out.

. . . . . .

It was for the honour of Scotland,
By reason he was Lord Warden ;
He stormed that any should presume
To enter the Scots Border,
Either Cornish, Irish, English, Welch,
Unless they had his Order ;

Buccleuch's Anger.

9

He has ta'en the table wi' his hand,
He garr'd the red wine spring on hie—
'Now Christ's curse on my head,' he said,
'But avenged of lord Scroope I 'll be!

10

'O is my basnet a widow's curch?
Or my lance a wand of the willow-tree?
Or my arm a ladye's lilye hand,
That an English lord should lightly me?

11

'And have they ta'en him, Kinmont Willie,
Against the truce of Border tide?
And forgotten that the bauld Buccleuch
Is keeper here on the Scottish side?

12

'And have they ta'en him, Kinmont Willie,
Withouten either dread or fear?
And forgotten that the bauld Buccleuch
Can back a steed, or shake a spear?

13

'O were there war between the lands,
As well I wot that there is none,
I would slight Carlisle Castell high,
Though it were builded of marble stone.

14

'I would set that castell in a lowe,
And sloken it with English blood!
There 's never a man in Cumberland,
Should ken where Carlisle castell stood.

Action taken by Buccleuch.

Thus being vext, he shew the Friends of the Name,
How the Lord Scroup had Willy Kinment tane ;
And said, if they would but take part with him,
He knew a way to bring him back again :
To which demand they presently did conclude,
They would serve his Honour to the last drop of their blood :

. . . . . .

His Friends advice that he desir'd to know,
Was . . . [*here follow names of various members of the Scott clan*]
And Gilbert Elliot, he was not of his Name,
But was his Honours Cousin-german ;
Those Gentlemen in Vote did all agree,
Five hundred to march in his Honours company ;
He thank'd them for their Vote, and said, that must not be,
Pick me out chosen men no more but thirty-three ;
[*The names of the thirty-three are then recounted at considerable length.*]
These gentlemen were all Scotts,
Except Gilbert Elliot of the Stobs,
Which was a valiant Gentleman,
And, as said before, my Lord's Cousin-German ;

15

'But sinee nae war 's between the lands,
And there is peace, and peace should be,
I 'll neither harm English lad or lass,
And yet the Kinmont freed shall be ! '

Action taken by Buccleuch.

16

He has call'd him forty marchmen bauld,
I trow they were of his ain name,
Except sir Gilbert Elliot, call'd
The laird of Stobs, I mean the same.

17

He has call'd him forty marchmen bauld,
Were kinsmen to the bauld Bueeleuch ;
With spur on heel, and splent on spauld,
And gleuves of green, and feathers blue.

These gentlemen did all conveen,
At Branksome-Gate His Honour to attend ;

. . . . . .
. . . . . .

The March to the Border.

Buckcleugh from Branksom took the way,
Through the Woods of Esk in a full Carier went he,
To the Woodhouseleys which is near to Netherbie ;
And there awhile continued he,
He brought Wrights along in his Company ;
And caused them Scaling-ladders make,
Although the Wrights knew not for what ;
Both artificial, long and strong,
There was six Horsemen to carry them along ;
In a high Carier my Lord did ride,
To the Woodhouslies on the Border-side ;
For Netherbie is in English ground,
But the Woodhouslies is in Scotland ;
There is a long Mile them between,
Divided by the River of Esk her furious Streams ;

Buccleuch spreads false reports.

The March to the Border.

18

There were five and five before them a'
Wi' hunting-horns and bugles bright :
And five and five came wi' Buccleuch,
Like Warden's men, array'd for fight.

19

And five and five, like a mason gang,
That carried the ladders lang and hie ;
And five and five, like broken men ;
And so they reach'd the Woodhouselee.

20

And as we cross'd the Bateable land,
When to the English side we held,
The first o' men that we met wi',
Whae suld it be but fause Sakelde ?

Buccleuch spreads false reports.

21

' Where be ye gaun, ye hunters keen ? '
Quo' fause Sakelde ; ' come tell to me ! '
' We go to hunt an English stag,
Has trespass'd on the Scots countrie.'

My Lord caused raise a vulgar report,
That he was only come to hold a Justice-Court :
Which caused Fugitives to flee,
Unto the Woods and Mountains high :
And for the Ladders tight and tall,
Was made for the Towers of Branksom-hall ;
Though it was made long and strong, and most compleat,
To reach Carelisles Castles Battlement ;
Such excuses there was for every thing,
But for 's Honours intention there was no din ;
Most privately he his course did steer,
About Christmas, the hinder end of the year.

The Advance to Carliste.
The state of the weather and rivers.

The day was past before the Wrights had done,
Then it was long eight Mile to Carelisle Town ;
The way was deep, and the Water was strong,[1]
And the Ladder was fifty Foot long ;

[1] The river here referred to is the Esk, at all times a very rapid stream.

22

'Where be ye gaun, ye marshal men ?'
Quo' fause Sakelde ; 'come tell me true !'
'We go to catch a rank reiver,
Has broken faith with the bauld Buccleuch'

23

'Where are ye gaun, ye mason lads,
Wi' a' your ladders, lang and hie ?'
'We gang to harry a corbie's nest,
That wons not far frae Woodhouselee.'

24

'Where be ye gaun, ye broken men ?'
Quo' fause Sakelde ; 'come tell to me !'
Now Dickie of Dryhope led that band,
And the nevir a word of lear had he.

25

'Why trespass ye on the English side ?
Row-footed outlaws, stand !' quo' he ;
The nevir a word had Dickie to say,
Sae he thrust his lance through his fause bodie.

The Advance to Carlisle.

The state of the weather and rivers.

26

Then on we held for Carlisle toun,
And at Staneshaw-bank the Eden we cross'd ;
The water was great and mickle of spait
But the nevir a horse nor man we lost.

[*Here follows a metaphorical account of the weather, which, in plain English, appears to have been dark and foggy, but not stormy. There was no thunderstorm.*]

Juno mask'd in a Fog, the Night was no way clear,
But yet his Honour did no longer bide,
But paced throughout the Muir to the River Eden-side ;
Near the Stonish-bank my Lord a time did stay,
And left the one half of his Company,
For fear they had made noise or din,
Near the Castle they should come,
The River was in no great rage,
They cross'd near half a mile below the Bridge ;

The Assault.

Then along the Sands with no noise at all,
They come close under the Castle Wall ;

Then masked Midnight slowth did keep,
And mortal eyes was inclined to sleep ;

27

And when we reached the Staneshaw-bank
The wind was rising loud and hie ;
And there the laird garr'd leave our steeds,
For fear that they should stamp and nie.

28

And when we left the Stane-shaw-bank,
The wind began full loud to blaw ;
But 'twas wind and weet, and fire and sleet,
When we came beneath the castle wa'.

The Assault.

29

We crept on knees, and held our breath,
Till we placed the ladders against the wa' ;
And sae ready was Buccleuch himsell
To mount the first before us a'.

30

He has ta'en the watchman by the throat,
He flung him down upon the lead—
' Had there not been peace between our lands,
Upon the other side thou had'st gaed ! '

31

' Now sound out, trumpets ! ' quo' Buccleuch ;
' Let 's waken lord Scroope right merrilie ! '
Then loud the Warden's trumpet blew—
' O wha daur meddle wi' me ? '

Immediately they did their Ladder plant,
Which reach'd the Castles Battlement ;
Then up the Ladder they reer but doubt,
And broke a sheet of lead on the Castle-top,
A passage made, and in they came,
The Cape-house-door they burst in twain ;

Then down the stairs they came amain,
Where Kinment fettered lay within,
Then with Fore-hammers Doors they broke down,
Amazing the lord Scroup and all his Garrison ;

32

Then speedilie to wark we gaed,
And raised the slogan ane and a',
And cut a hole thro' a sheet of lead,
And so we wan the castle ha'.

33

They thought king James and a' his men
Had won the house wi' bow and spear;
It was but twenty Scots and ten,
That put a thousand in sic a steir![1]

34

Wi' coulters, and wi' forehammers,
We garr'd the bars bang merrilie,
Until we came to the inner prison,
Where Willie o' Kinmont he did lie.

35

And when we came to the lower prison,
Where Willie o' Kinmont he did lie—
'O sleep ye, wake ye, Kinmont Willie,
Upon the morn that thou 's to die?'

36

'O I sleep saft, and I wake aft;
It 's lang since sleeping was fley'd frae me!
Gie my service back to my wife and bairns,
And a' gude fellows that speir for me.'

[1] This stanza appears to be founded on lines 4, 5, and 6 from the top of page 148.

Kinmont is removed from the Castle and bids Lord Scroup Farewell!

They hors'd Kinment with his bolts upon a strong mans back,
And to the Castle-top in the Ladder they did him set,
The Wardens Trumpets did most sweetly sound,
Which put the Garison in a fear,
That all Scotland was come;
The Governour thought the Castle had been gone
He intended for to run and surely to save none;
Then Kinment said, when first here I did come,
Lord Scroup engaged me to take leave of him;
Then with a turning voice he did cry out,
Farewell, farewell to my good lord Scroup,
Which terrified the English more,
By an hundred times than they were before;
Then down the Ladder in haste they Willy gat.
And set him Sadle-aside upon a Horses back.

The Retreat to Scotland.

Mean time the Trumpets sounded, Come if ye dare,
They were the last men that came down the wooden stair,
They mounted all with speed, and safely did return
The self same way they formerly did come;

Kinmont is removed from the Castle and bids Lord Scroup Farewell!

37

Then Red Rowan has hente him up,
The starkest man in Teviotdale—

'Abide, abide now, Red Rowan,
Till of my lord Scroope I take farewell.

38

'Farewell, farewell, my gude lord Scroope!
My gude lord Scroope, farewell!' he cried—
'I 'll pay you for my lodging maill,
When first we meet on the Border side.'

39

Then shoulder high, with shout and cry,
We bore him down the ladder gang;
At every stride Red Rowan made,
I wot the Kinmont's airns play'd clang!

The Retreat to Scotland.

40

'O mony a time,' quo' Kinmont Willie,
'I have ridden a horse baith wild and wud;
But a rougher beast than Red Rowan
I ween my legs have ne'er bestrode.

They observ'd neither file nor rank,
They met with the rest of their Party at Stenicks-bank :
Carlisles Dark-muirs they did pass through,
There was never a man did them pursue,
To Lines-water they come with speed,
Then past the Muirs on the other side ;
Then Kinment Willy cry'd out with pain,
And said his irons had him undone,
The which to his Legs stuck like Burs,
He never rode before with such large Spurs ;
They stayed for no smith on the English ground,
At Canninbie they arrived into Scotland
Without loss or hurt to any man.

. . . . . .
. . . . . .

41

'And mony a time,' quo' Kinmont Willie,
'I 've pricked a horse out oure the furs;
But since the day I back'd a steed,
I never wore sic cumbrous spurs!'

42

We scarce had won the Staneshaw-bank,
When a' the Carlisle bells were rung,
And a thousand men on horse and foot,
Cam wi' the keen lord Scroope along.

43

Buccleuch has turn'd to Eden Water,
Even where it flowed frae bank to brim,
And he has plung'd in wi' a' his band,
And safely swam them through the stream.

44

He turn'd him on the other side,
And at lord Scroope his glove flung he—
'If ye like na my visit in merry England
In fair Scotland come visit me!'

45

All sore astonish'd stood lord Scroope,
He stood as still as rock of stane;
He scarcely dared to trew his eyes,
When through the water he had gane.

46

'He is either himsell a devil frae hell,
Or else his mother a witch maun be;
I wadna have ridden that wan water
For a' the gowd in Christentie.'

NUMBER IV

ON THE GENESIS OF THE BALLADS OF 'JAMIE TELFER' AND 'AULD MAITLAND'

ON THE GENESIS OF THE BALLADS OF 'JAMIE TELFER' AND 'AULD MAITLAND'

In the *Scottish Historical Review* for July 1906, Mr. Andrew Lang, in reviewing a book I had shortly before published,[1] made his chief comments on that portion referring to the ballad of 'Jamie Telfer,' and in so doing revealed himself as the writer of another review which appeared in the Literary Supplement of the *Times* of July 30.

The object I had in view was to show that there were very strong grounds for accepting the story told in the ballad as essentially true, but since two versions, giving irreconcilable accounts of the same incidents, exist, it became necessary in the first place to determine which of these was the older. Mr. Lang agrees with me in the conclusion reached, namely that the Elliot version, as he calls it, is older than the one published by Sir Walter Scott in the *Minstrelsy*,[2] and this being so, I do not under-

[1] *The Trustworthiness of Border Ballads.* (William Blackwood and Sons, Edinburgh, 1906.)

[2] Mr. Lang's words are: 'Later a bard, Elliot we think, produced the ballad, and a Scott, we think, altered it.'

I quite agree that 'a Scott' altered it, but I can see no reason

stand why he should bestow the labour he does in attempting to shake my arguments as to the *Minstrelsy* version being inconsistent with our knowledge of history and with topography; this is all the more surprising since, in his essay on the 'Ballads' in Chambers's *Encyclopædia of English Literature* (1901), he wrote that had Scott invented 'Jamie Telfer' he 'would have made the topography *plausible*.'

In adducing evidence—and it is good evidence—of the existence in former days of a Catslock Hill near Branxholm, he is simply drawing a red herring across the track of the argument, for it does not matter whether there was or was not. In my book I assumed for the sake of argument that there was such a place between Coultart Cleugh and Branxholm, and I showed this in no way rendered the story told in the *Minstrelsy* version of the ballad more credible.[1] I willingly accept Mr. Lang's assurance that there was a Catslock Hill close to Branxholm and that it was a very important place, for the

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for thinking that an Elliot produced it. It does not do honour to the Elliot clan—as Mr. Lang asserts I claim—nor to any clan in particular. In my book (pages 48-9) I drew attention to the fact that in the respect of not mentioning clans, it is similar to other Border ballads of the period, while markedly dissimilar to the *Minstrelsy* version.

[1] *The Trustworthiness of Border Ballads*, pp. 14-15.

nearer to Branxholm, the more important the place, the stronger becomes my argument as to its unsuitability to the tale. Mr. Lang may, perhaps, be successful in picking out trivial inaccuracies of which I may have been guilty—though I do not admit he has done even this so far—but he will never shake my main topographical argument until he can prove that the localities named in the ballad, namely, Branxholm, Stobs and Coultart Cleugh, have changed their relative positions during the last three centuries, or that two sides of a triangle are not longer than the third. And even if he successfully wrestles with either or both of these alternatives, I shall remain indifferent so long as he continues to agree with me that the *Minstrelsy* version is the later of the two.

Since there is but little beauty in the original version its chief, perhaps its only, interest lies in its claim to being a fairly true picture—allowance being made for poetical licence—of events which occurred more than three hundred years ago.

In my book I showed (1) that the ballad is consistent with topography ; (2) that, in so far as the related actions of individuals are concerned, it is consistent with common sense, with possibility, and with probability ; (3) that it is consistent with history, in so far that four of the chief actors in the scene flourished at the time in question.

With regard to (1) and (2) Mr. Lang appears to agree with me. As to (3) he differs with regard to the accuracy of the ballad in referring to one of the individuals. He points to the mention of 'auld Buccleuch'; Buccleuch, he says, must have been under thirty-eight years of age at the time, and *therefore* there was, in fact, no auld 'Buccleuch,' and *therefore* the version is historically untrustworthy.

I am really in doubt whether I should take such an argument as seriously intended, and consequently it is with diffidence that I venture to point out that the adjective *old* or *auld*, is sometimes employed otherwise than to indicate *advanced in years*; the expressions *old boy*, *old fellow*, occur to one at once; and frequently they carry a suggestion of sagacity or slyness—*e.g.* auld thief—and this is, in my opinion, the sense in which it is used in both versions of the ballad.

Then, Mr. Lang makes the definite assertion that the facts as given in the ballad never occurred at all. When he writes that 'the story in both ballads is wholly unhistorical'[1] he is doubtless correct, inas-

[1] Mr. Lang appears to have altered his views since writing his essay on 'The Ballads' in Chambers's *Encyclopædia of English Literature*, 1901. Referring to the Scottish historical ballads, in which he included the *Minstrelsy* version of 'Jamie Telfer,' he wrote, 'They rest on recent history.'

much as no documentary record of it exists, or, perhaps I should say, is known to exist. If we could only learn all the facts relating to the past we should probably find our histories to be as remarkable for their omissions as they doubtless are for their fables.

Now, what reason does Mr. Lang give for his bold statement? Merely this: The incident is not, he says, mentioned in Bain's *Border Papers.*

Consequently he is forced into an attempt to show that this negative reason is in itself conclusive of his affirmation. In this, in my opinion, he fails; the facts he brings forward, indeed, rather add to than detract from the probability of those referred to in the ballad being essentially true.

'The published despatches,' he writes (*Times* article), 'from the Border officials to the English Government during 1596-97 occupy four hundred printed pages. These contain the minutest records of every Border incident.' Now, even assuming that the published despatches include all the despatches written—and I understand from Mr. Bain's preface that this is not the case—I cannot for one moment believe that every incident which took place on the Borders during the many years in which *possibly* this one may have occurred can have been mentioned. Simmy Elliot, who, the ballad tells us, was killed in the fight, was alive in 1592, and there-

fore the incident may have occurred during any of the eleven years between then and 1603, the date of the Union of the Crowns. And if Simmy was not killed—and really ballads ought not to be read absolutely literally in their references to killed and wounded—the raid might have occurred even before 1592. We may, surely, be absolutely certain that many ' an unfortunate incident ' occurring in so long a period was not mentioned, and even more certain—if that be possible—that of those that were reported many a detail, not by any means always of the ' minutest ' nature, must have been omitted.

' By referring to Bain's *Border Papers* anybody can find out,' writes Mr. Lang in the *Scottish Historical Review*, ' how and when the Captain of Bewcastle was taken, where and by whom; namely by Kinmont Willie and the Armstrongs (July 3, 1596).' This is interesting information, but it is no proof that a Captain of Bewcastle was not also taken or killed at some other place and at some other time, while it corroborates, to some extent, the story of the ballad as to a Captain of Bewcastle having been defeated by Liddesdale men.

Then Mr. Lang tells us, on the authority of Bain's *Border Papers*, of three historical facts, namely, the defeat of the Captain of Bewcastle in 1596, the repulse by Liddesdale men (the Elliots) of Tynedale

raiders (the date is not mentioned), and, as a result of this repulse, the killing, in 1597, not of Simmy Elliot but of his brother Martin. Mr. Lang appears to suggest that the ballad had its origin in these events; as to this I shall not express an opinion but shall confine myself to asking the following question: Assuming this conjecture to be true, is Mr. Lang justified in writing, 'The ballad is thus a mere late mythical perversion of carefully recorded historical facts'? It would, surely, be more correct to say that it is a fairly true, though jumbled, account of actual incidents, separated from each other by only short periods of time, the historical record of which in the English State Papers could not possibly have been known to the composer.

Mr. Lang lays stress on the fact that the ballad records—incorrectly, he says—the death of Simmy Elliot. It is astounding with what absolute assurance he makes the following definite statements: 'No Simmy Elliot was killed' (*i.e.* in the raid of 1596). 'In 1597, not Simmy but his brother Martin was slain.' The point seems to me to be very unimportant, for there is little to be surprised at in a mistake as to the name having occurred in a ballad which, if authentic, has been handed down orally through many generations; but since Mr. Lang appears to think differently I must point out that

Simmy had no brother named Martin. Simmy was the eldest son of the *ipso facto* Chief, Martin Elliot, and nothing is more likely than that the writer of the State Paper—for I presume this to be the source of Mr. Lang's information [1]—should have, inadvertently or through ignorance, referred to the eldest son by the father's name. However this may be, the broad fact remains that in this particular the ballad is right, 'the historical record' wrong.

But, though this matter in itself is, as I have already said, of little importance, we nevertheless derive from it knowledge of a fact which is extremely so. We learn that the author of the ballad was not dependent for his knowledge of details upon 'the carefully recorded historical facts' contained in the English State Papers. Whence did he derive it? I answer from tradition. What is Mr. Lang's answer?

If we believe with Mr. Lang that the ballad has reference to the three historical facts which he cites,

[1] Since writing the above, I find I am wrong in ascribing Bain's *Border Papers* as the source from which Mr. Lang derived the information that it was Simmy's brother, Martin, who was killed. According to them—see papers 675 and 676, vol. ii.—the individual slain was 'an Ellot of Martin's clan called Martin's Gibbe,' from which we may surely infer he was not a son. This is also clear from paper 197, vol. i., wherein the names of the members of Martin's family are given. Gibbe was in fact not a son but a 'brother son to Martin.'—See The Hon. George Elliot's *The Border Elliots and Family of Minto*, p. 218; also pp. 146 and 239.

namely, to the defeat of a Captain of Bewcastle, to the repulse of a party of Tynedale raiders, and to the death of a son of the Chief of the Elliot clan, why should we refuse to credit the other incident mentioned, namely, the raid to Dodhead? This might quite well have been conducted by a party detached from the main body of raiders in 1596, and since, as a matter of fact, nothing more resulted than an unsuccessful attempt to capture ten head of cattle, there is little cause for surprise at no mention having been made of the affair in the English official reports. How then, it may be asked, are we to believe that the record of an affair too trumpery to be noticed even among the 'minutest' details in the English official reports should have been preserved in the form of a ballad for so many generations? To this I can best reply by referring to the opening sentences of the chapter on 'Verse relating to Flodden Field' in my *Trustworthiness of Border Ballads*, where I have pointed out that our Border ballad-makers appear to have preferred to sing rather of trivial than of important historical incidents. Can, indeed, any Border ballad be quoted as being based on an important historical incident? There may have been—I think probably there was—a Border ballad on the battle of Otterburn, but what other can be named? The

Raid of the Reidswire was hardly an important historical incident. The song 'Wha daur meddle wi' me?' refers to an incident which, though doubtless of importance to 'Little Jock Elliot,' to Lord Bothwell, and to Queen Mary, was hardly so to the world at large.

The raid to Carlisle, which formed the subject of the ballad 'Kinmont Willie,' again was hardly of great importance, and there can, alas, be little credence in the authenticity of that ballad.

It must be remembered that the suggestion as to the ballad having had its origin in the events of 1596-97 is not mine, but Mr. Lang's; I am merely showing that, assuming its truth, there is nevertheless no sound reason for asserting that the raid to Dodhead never took place.

I am ignorant of any other argument having been put forward by Mr. Lang—or by any one else—in support of his view; doubtless in his introductory note to 'Jamie Telfer' in Chambers's *Encyclopædia* he writes: 'No English reivers would ride on a hasty foray from the Marches to Dodhead in Ettrick,' but this is not an argument; it is merely an expression of opinion, of an opinion of which the unsoundness has been completely exposed in my book.

The whole of this introductory note is so remarkable that I cannot refrain from giving it at length,

interpolating a few remarks as I go. I ought, however, in the first place, to mention that Mr. Lang is referring entirely to the ballad given in the *Minstrelsy* ; no mention is made of the older, *i.e.* ' Elliot ' version.

He writes : ' Scott is responsible for this fine riding ballad, but probably did no more than add touches here and there. [*Later he writes that the four or five most stirring verses were composed by Scott.*[1]] This is probably because he represents the Dodhead as being near Singlee in Ettrick. [*Scott was perfectly correct.*] Now Telfer could not have covered in time the great distance from Singlee to Branxholm [*shortness of time was due to the fact that, instead of stopping at Branxholm, he passed the door and went on to Stobs, and thence, instead of returning to Branxholm, he went to Coultart Cleugh, and then at last he made for Branxholm : see map in my book*], and he would probably have applied for aid to Scott of Tushielaw and Scott of Thirlestane, his neighbours [*had he done so he would have abandoned all hope of recovering his cattle, as shown in my book*], not to Elliot of Stobs, who was very remote. In fact there is a Dodburn (and therefore a Dodhead) [! !] on the southern side of Teviot, within touch of Stobs, but Scott was obviously

[1] *Literary Forgeries*, p. 266.

unaware of the fact [*why? had he been aware of it, as he probably was, I cannot conceive his altering his view as to the position of Dodhead*] which makes the events in the ballad possible. [*It does no such thing. Wherever the Dodhead may have been, the events as related in the* Minstrelsy *are ludicrously impossible.*] It may therefore be inferred that he really received the ballad from tradition [*yet Mr. Lang subsequently writes that the ballad is 'a mere late mythical perversion of carefully recorded historical facts'*]; had he invented it he would have made the topography plausible. [*He has never, I think, been accused of 'inventing' it; there is no doubt that he or 'a Scott' manufactured it by perverting an older version.*] No English reivers would ride on a hasty foray from the Marches to Dodhead in Ettrick. [*This has been already remarked upon.*] Telfer would still find the kin of Jock Grieve on the old farms in Teviotdale.'

The note here ends.

I have still to remark on the argument that since there is a Dodburn there must therefore be a Dodhead! It is absolutely unsound and untrue; yet doubtless it carries weight with those who do not know the country, and I fear with many who do, seeing that it is advanced by a distinguished authority on ballad literature, who is moreover a Borderer.

Had a peel or farm ever existed at the head of the Dodburn—and there is excellent reason for thinking this was not the case—it would not have been called 'Dodhead'; it would have been 'Dodburnhead.' The name of the stream is not the 'Dod,' but the 'Dodburn'; it derives its name from the hill—the Dod rig—from which it flows. On the Borders we frequently find the suffixes 'head' and 'foot' attached to the names of streams; thus, we have the rivers 'Teviot,' 'Rule,' 'Jed,' and we have 'Teviothead,' 'Rulefoot,' 'Rulehead,' 'Jedfoot,' 'Jedhead'; they are also attached to 'Burn,' 'Hope,' 'Cleuch,' etc., thus 'Burnfoot,' 'Winterhopehead,' 'Minto Cleughhead.' And generally when a stream takes its name from the locality through which it flows or from which it rises, the suffixes, 'head' and 'foot,' are attached not to the name of the locality but to the name of the stream. To suggest that farms at the head of Winterhope, or of Minto burn could possibly have been named 'Winterhead' or 'Mintohead' is as preposterous, though not one whit more so, as to suggest that a peel at the head of the Dodburn would have been called 'Dodhead.'

In my opinion all the arguments used in favour of the assertion that the raid to Dodhead in Ettrick never took place are thoroughly unsound.

We shall continue to believe or to disbelieve the story according to our several natures ; direct proof either way is hardly within the bounds of possibility. It is possible, no doubt, and perhaps not improbable, that the ballad, like so many others which came to light at this period, may still be shown to be a forgery, yet, even then, there would remain ground for the belief that the main incidents related were based on tradition.

We may now pass on to a matter which, though in no way bearing upon the question of the historical trustworthiness of the original ballad, suggests interesting conjectures regarding the genesis of the Scott version and also of that of the ballad of 'Auld Maitland.'

In the *Scottish Historical Review* Mr. Lang asserts that I am wrong in supposing that Scott knew Mrs. Hogg's version of 'Jamie Telfer' before he published the *Minstrelsy* ; and, again, in the *Times* article he writes : 'How could Scott know that the Hoggs had any version ? Not till after he published his own did he get Mrs. Hogg's great treasure, "Auld Maitland," and in the autumn of 1802 returned from the Forest "loaded with the treasures of oral tradition," so he writes to Ellis.'

Now, Mr. Henderson, in the centenary edition of the *Minstrelsy*, says that 'Scott's acquaintance with

Laidlaw was made after the two first volumes of the *Minstrelsy* appeared '—early in 1802—and in Lockhart's *Life of Scott* we are told that it was Laidlaw who introduced Scott to Hogg ; but, even assuming these statements are correct, it does not necessarily follow that my surmise as to Scott having known of Mrs. Hogg's version before publishing his own is wrong, for he and Hogg had been corresponding before the time when, it is alleged, they first became personally acquainted (see further on at page 172), or, again, the ballad might have been procured for Scott by one of his fellow ballad-hunters, such as Leyden or Laidlaw.

But is Mr. Henderson's statement correct ? Is Mr. Lang correct in asserting that it was not till after Scott had published his version that he got ' Mrs. Hogg's great treasure, " Auld Maitland," and in the autumn of 1802, returned from the Forest " loaded with the treasures of oral tradition." '[1]

These last words are not very clear, but most

[1] Sir Walter Scott's words as to his return from the Forest ' loaded with the treasures of oral tradition ' are constantly quoted in works on Border ballads, and are invariably taken as applying to songs and ballads. It may be of interest to point out that in the third volume of the *Minstrelsy* (the first two volumes had been published before the date of his letter to Ellis, in which the words occur), there are not more than two ballads—if indeed so many—which he had neither known of before, or which had not been published before.

readers, at all events those not fairly well up in the subject, would probably understand from them that Scott did not know of 'Auld Maitland' until the autumn of 1802. I can hardly believe Mr. Lang can mean this, yet a doubt as to Scott not having known of the ballad till then appears to have been in his mind when writing the chapter on ballad forgers in *Literary Forgeries*. Referring to 'Auld Maitland' he says—see page 255—that 'rather curiously Scott gives two different accounts of how he obtained the ballad,' that is to say that Scott's statement in the *Minstrelsy*, namely that 'the ballad is published from the recitation of the mother of Mr. James Hogg,' is inconsistent with his letter in the autumn of 1802 to Ellis, which is as follows: 'We (Scott and Leyden) have just concluded an excursion of two or three weeks through my jurisdiction of Selkirkshire . . . and have returned loaded with the treasures of oral tradition. The principal result of our inquiries has been a complete and perfect copy of "Maitland with his Auld Berd Graie." . . . You may guess the surprise of Leyden and myself when this was presented to us, copied down from the recitation of an old shepherd, by a country farmer. . . .'

Scott does not here say that he had not heard the ballad before; in the *Minstrelsy* he does not say that

he was ignorant of its existence until he obtained it through Mrs. Hogg, nor is there any reason why such an inference should be drawn, which, moreover, would be contradictory to Hogg's explanation of Scott's motive for visiting him on the famous occasion when his mother chanted the ballad (see page 178).

The observation in *Literary Forgeries* would have had stronger support if reference had been made to a later letter from Scott to Ellis, given in Lockhart's *Life of Scott*, page 364, vol. i. The date of the letter is not mentioned, but it must, I think, have been after October, probably in November or December 1802. Referring to the ballad, Scott tells Ellis 'to inquire all about it of Leyden, who was with me when I received my first copy.' Had we nothing but these words to go by, there would, indeed, be strong justification for assuming that the first occasion on which he heard of the ballad was that on which the country farmer presented him and Leyden with a copy, and that the 'surprise' caused was due to his hearing what was absolutely new to him.

The author of the Life of the Ettrick Shepherd [1] also takes the view that it was on the occasion of

[1] *The Works of the Ettrick Shepherd* (1865, by the Rev. Thomas Thomson). See p. xvii.

Scott's 'raid' into the wilds of Yarrow in the autumn of 1802 that he and Hogg first met and when the former heard Mrs. Hogg chant the ballad of 'Old Maitland.'

But as against this, we have the fact that previous to the autumn of 1802, on June 30, Hogg had written to Scott as follows: 'I am surprised to hear that this song "Auld Maitland" is suspected by some to be a modern forgery; the contrary will be best proved, by most of the old people, hereabouts, having a great part of it by heart.'[1] This clearly proves that the 'copy' Scott subsequently received was not the first version he had come across: the 'surprise,' then, expressed to Mr. Ellis was not due to hearing the ballad for the first time, but more probably to receiving 'a complete and perfect copy of it' from a source hitherto unknown to him.

My view is that Scott had no wish to make Ellis think that he first became acquainted with the ballad in the autumn of 1802. No definite words carrying this meaning can be pointed out; those which approximate nearest to it are those telling us when he received his first copy, but *receiving a*

[1] *Minstrelsy*, introductory note to 'Auld Maitland.' The letter is given, though not in quite a complete form, in *Familiar Letters*, by Sir Walter Scott (David Douglas, Edinburgh, 1894). Curiously enough, the words which I have quoted above are amongst those omitted.

copy for the first time does not necessarily mean *becoming acquainted with the ballad for the first time.*[1]

[1] Since in the text I have endeavoured to show that the two accounts given by Sir Walter Scott, and referred to by Mr. Lang in *Literary Forgeries*, are not necessarily inconsistent, it is only right that I should draw attention to what would appear to be yet another account of how 'Auld Maitland' was discovered. I refer to a curious anecdote of Leyden, mentioned by Scott in his *Biographical Memoirs*. After telling us that in 1802, Leyden had been employing himself earnestly in procuring materials for the *Minstrelsy*, he writes:—'An interesting fragment had been obtained of an ancient historical ballad, but the remainder, to the great disturbance of the editor and his coadjutor, was not to be recovered. Two days afterwards, while the editor was sitting with some company after dinner, a sound was heard at a distance like that of the whistling of a tempest through the torn rigging of the vessel which scuds before it. The sounds increased as they approached more near, and Leyden (to the great astonishment of such of the guests as did not know him) burst into the room, chanting the desiderated ballad, with the most enthusiastic gesture, and all the energy of the saw-tones of his voice already commemorated. It turned out, that he had walked between forty and fifty miles, and back again, for the sole purpose of visiting an old person who possessed this precious remnant of antiquity.' To what ballad or song was Scott referring?

The only historical ballads published in the third volume of the *Minstrelsy*, and which had not been published before are the following:—'Auld Maitland,' 'The Dowie Dens o' Yarrow,' 'The Lament of the Border Widow,' 'Sir Hugh le Blond,' 'Græme and Bewick,' 'The Douglas Tragedy,' 'The Battle of Philiphaugh,' 'The Battle of Loudon Hill,' 'The Battle of Bothwell Bridge,' and 'The Gallant Grahams.'

From this list we must strike out such as Scott clearly did not refer to, namely, 'Sir Hugh le Blond,' which Scott obtained not in Selkirkshire, but from Mr. Burnet of Monboddo in Forfarshire; 'Græme and Bewick,' got from an ostler in Carlisle; 'The Douglas Tragedy,' got from Mr. Sharpe; the Battles of Philiphaugh, of Loudon Hill, and of Bothwell Bridge, must be struck out since

Moreover, if we believe that when he wrote to Ellis in November or December he wished him to think one thing, how can we explain that early next year he published to the world, in his third volume of the *Minstrelsy*, something entirely different ? And what possible motive could he have had ?

But whether my views as to Scott's innocence in respect of the charge of having given two different accounts be accepted as probable or not, the fact

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Scott would most certainly not have referred to them as ancient. I think we may also strike out 'The Gallant Grahams.' Scott tells us he got it from tradition, but the tradition is more likely to have belonged to Dumbartonshire than to Selkirkshire.

We have remaining the following three ballads, all of which Scott obtained in Selkirkshire, namely, 'Auld Maitland,' 'The Dowie Dens,' and 'The Lament of the Border Widow.' I do not imagine any one will contend that Scott referred to the last named, and with reference to the 'Dowie Dens,' he wrote in the introductory note that it was a very great favourite among the inhabitants of Ettrick Forest, and he 'found it easy to collect a variety of copies.' This does not fit in with his anecdote of Leyden, where he implies that the ballad was extremely difficult to get. We are consequently reduced to believing either that he was referring to 'Auld Maitland,' that he was giving yet another account of its genesis, or that, for some reason unmentioned, he did not consider it desirable to publish this 'interesting' and 'ancient historical song,' a 'precious remnant of antiquity.'

But, assuming that Scott was alluding to the discovery of 'Auld Maitland,' though the account is very different to that he gave to Ellis, the difference is rather in amplification than in inconsistencies, for are we justified in saying that the statement to Ellis that the ballad 'was presented to us' is inconsistent with the statement in the *Memoirs* that it was presented to, or obtained by Leyden—who was one of 'us'?

that he was acquainted with the existence of the ballad previous to the occasion he referred to in his letters to Ellis is, from Hogg's letter of June 30, 1802, absolutely unquestionable, and, as I have already said, I cannot think Mr. Lang can wish to throw a doubt upon it. He must mean, surely, that Scott did not get Mrs. Hogg's 'Auld Maitland' till the spring of 1802, and here he will be on common ground with Mr. Henderson. Let us now consider this, let us consider Mr. Henderson's statement that Scott did not make the acquaintance of Laidlaw, and consequently of Hogg, until after the publication of the first two volumes of the *Minstrelsy*.

Hogg's letter of June 30, to which I have just referred, shows that he and Scott had been personally acquainted with each other before that date,[1] and the question to solve is, How long before ?

Mr. Henderson's view that this acquaintanceship was not made until after the appearance of the first two volumes of the *Minstrelsy*, that is to say early in 1802, appears to me to be inconsistent with Lockhart's *Life of Scott*, where we read [2] that after Scott's return from Liddesdale in the late summer of 1800

[1] The letter runs thus: 'I have been perusing your *Minstrelsy* very diligently for a while past, and it being the first book I ever perused which was written by *a person I had seen and conversed with.*'

[2] Vol. i. (1st edition), pp. 327, 328, and 329.

he resided frequently at Clovenfords, whence he oftentimes visited Yarrow and Ettrick with the express object of ballad-hunting, and that it was at this time he made Laidlaw's acquaintance. We are also told that Laidlaw took care that Scott should 'see without delay one'—Hogg—'whose enthusiasm about the minstrelsy of the Forest was equal to his own.' There is nothing to lead a reader to think that the time to which Lockhart referred was other than very shortly after the summer of 1800. And yet we are asked to believe that he was referring to 1802! It is really hard to think that Scott should for so long a time have failed to come across one who was far from being unknown in the district; who in 1800 published a song, 'Donald M'Donald,' which was sung far and wide throughout Scotland; who in 1801 published a collection of poems, etc., and whose enthusiasm in such matters equalled Sir Walter's. One would have thought Hogg would have been the very first person Scott would have entered into communication with.

Again, in the introductory note to the ballad—'Auld Maitland'—Scott himself tells us that it was known to a few old people on the Ettrick, and he seems to confirm Hogg's statement as to most of the old people in his neighbourhood having it by heart; and, further, in a note to stanza 62, reference is made

to 'some reciters.' We are clearly intended to understand that the knowledge of the ballad was not at all confined to merely one or two individuals—and now we are told that this keen, sharp-scenting ballad-hunter, the Sheriff-Depute of the county since 1799, never hit off the line till 1802! (I quite believe, however, that he did not hear of the ballad till then, but my view is that it was *not in existence* before!)

Again, it may be worth remarking that in the introductory note and immediately following the extract from Hogg's letter, Scott writes as follows: 'To the observations of my ingenious correspondent I have nothing to add, but that, in this, and a thousand other instances they accurately coincide with my personal knowledge.' One would hardly have expected Scott to write in this strain had his acquaintance with Hogg been of only a few months' standing.

Then again, Hogg in his 'Reminiscences of some of his Contemporaries,'[1] says that Scott visited him—he does not say for the first time—in the summer of 1801. The correctness, however, of this date may be very fairly questioned, since in his account of the visit he refers to having already seen the first volumes of

[1] *Life of the Ettrick Shepherd*, by the Rev. Thomas Thomson 1865. See page 461.

the *Minstrelsy* ; either he was wrong in regard to the date of the visit, or wrong in ascribing to that visit the circumstances he relates. It is not improbable that, writing as Hogg was doing many years after the event, he should have confused the circumstances of one visit with those of another.

Of course, if Hogg was correct as to 1801 having been the year in which the visit took place,[1] the question at issue—namely whether Scott knew Hogg before the publication of ' Jamie Telfer ' in 1802, and might consequently have been acquainted with his version of that ballad—is settled ; but, for the sake of argument, let us suppose him to have been wrong as to the date, right as to his incidents.

It is clear that previous to this visit Hogg and Scott had been corresponding, and I know of nothing to lead one to infer that they had not met before. What was the motive for the visit ? Hogg tells us : ' Mr. Scott had some dread of a part of a copy of " Auld Maitland " '—which Hogg had sent to him—' being forged ; that had been the cause of his journey into the wilds of Ettrick.' There is no suggestion

[1] A letter from Scott to Laidlaw, dated 12th May 1802, is given in Scott's *Familiar Letters*, p. 71. In this he asks Laidlaw to accept his two volumes of the *Minstrelsy*, in acknowledgment, apparently, of Laidlaw's assistance in their preparation. On p. 12 the editor mentions that 'Hogg had been asked by Laidlaw to help him in obtaining materials for the *Minstrelsy* ; and they had met Scott in the *previous* summer,' *i.e.* in the summer of 1801.

that the visit was with a view to make Hogg's acquaintance; it was simply to clear up some doubtful matter concerning which they had already been in correspondence.

Hogg writes that when he was told that Scott was waiting to see him, he 'was rejoiced to hear it, for I had seen the first volumes of the *Minstrelsy* and had copied a number of old ballads from my mother's recital, and sent them to the Editor preparatory for a third volume.' Though these words certainly imply that it was not until after the appearance of the first volumes of the *Minstrelsy* that he sent old ballads to Scott, yet they are not absolutely definite, and, moreover, are inconsistent with a particularly specific assertion, which I shall now draw attention to. Hogg tells us that when his mother had ceased chanting 'Auld Maitland,' Scott was quite satisfied it was not a forgery, 'and I remember he asked her if she thought it had ever been printed; and her answer was, "Oo, na, na, sir, it was never printed i' the world, for my brothers and me learned it frae auld Andrew Moor, an' he learned it, an' mony mae, frae auld Baby Mettlin (Maitland) that was housekeeper to the first laird o' Tushielaw." "Then, that must be a very old story indeed, Margaret," said he. "Ay, it is that! it is an auld story! But mair nor that, except George Warton and James Steward,

there was never ane o' my sangs prentit till ye prentit them yoursell, an' ye hae spoilt them a' thegither. They war made for singing, an' no for reading ; and they 're nouther right spelled nor right settin down." ' So even if Hogg was wrong in the date he assigned to this visit, we still have it that Scott had printed some of Mrs. Hogg's songs before its occurrence. Can we doubt but that it was in the *Minstrelsy* he printed them ? I suggest that ' Jamie Telfer ' might have been one of these songs, and this would account for Hogg's surprise at the *Minstrelsy* version differing so much from his mother's.

Mr. Lang says (*Times* article), and quite truly, that there is no proof that Scott had seen or heard Mrs. Hogg's version, *i.e.* of ' Jamie Telfer.' On the other hand there is no proof that he had not, and the probability, as I have shown, is so great that he had, as necessarily to influence our judgment.

Mr. Lang also says (*Scottish Historical Review*) : I am ' wrong in supposing that Scott knew of Mrs. Hogg's version of " Jamie Telfer " before he published the *Minstrelsy* ; this is certain from Hogg's letter to Scott of June 3 (*sic*), 1802.' I suppose he means the letter of June 30 ; if so, there is nothing in it to warrant this assertion. From that letter we learn (1) that Scott and Hogg were previously acquainted ; (2) that for some time the latter had

been copying his mother's songs for the former who should see them shortly [there is not a word indicative of his not having already supplied some]; (3) that Scott was already aware of 'Auld Maitland.' [This appears from Hogg's remark as to the song being thought by some to be a forgery. It is given in the extract from the letter published in the introductory note in the *Minstrelsy*, but it is not given in the letter as printed in *Familiar Letters*.] (4) That Hogg was surprised at Scott's songs differing so widely from his mother's. (5) That Hogg remarked on his mother's version of 'Jamie Telfer' differing much from Scott's. [This is also not contained in the letter in *Familiar Letters*; I get it from Mr. Lang's article in the *Times*.] This remark is quite in keeping with Mrs. Hogg's words to Scott as to her songs having been 'nouther right spelled nor right settin down.' (6) Perhaps we may also infer that Scott had not up to the time when the letter was written visited Hogg at his cottage; but this is not very clear.

No other information at all bearing on the matter is to be got out of this letter. I ask how does it prove that Scott did not know of Mrs. Hogg's 'Jamie Telfer' before he published the *Minstrelsy*?

In so far as my essay on 'Jamie Telfer,' in *The Trustworthiness of Border Ballads*, is concerned, the

question whether Scott had, or had not, seen the Hogg version before publishing his own is absolutely immaterial, unless, indeed, it can be shown that that was the only version known to be in existence at the time. My argument was that the author of the *Minstrelsy* version must have been acquainted with the version, the MS. of which is now in the possession of Mr. Macmath and which formerly belonged to Mr. Kirkpatrick Sharpe No one looking at these two versions, which are printed side by side in my book, will for one moment doubt that the author of the later version *must* have been acquainted with the earlier ; I think, also, that no one who takes the trouble to read my essay will dissent from Mr. Lang and myself as to the *Minstrelsy* version being the later of the two.

But perhaps there were more than two versions in existence, perhaps the Hogg version constituted a third ?

Scott, in his introductory note to the ballad, referred to a version which attributed the defeat of the English raiders to the Elliots under their Chief Martin, whose son Simmy was killed ; Sharpe's version, a version which Mr. Lang calls ' the Elliot version,' does this, and I think we may be fairly confident that they are one and the same. It differs greatly from the version published by Scott; although

stanza after stanza of the one is almost verbally identical with stanza after stanza of the other, yet they are essentially different ; the parts played by two rival clans are reversed ; the one is consistent, the other inconsistent, with topography and with other facts ; the one, Scott's version, contains lines of most striking beauty, the other has not one.

But Hogg's version also differed greatly from Scott's.

Of course it would be absurd to argue that because two versions differ from a third therefore the two are similar ; but if not similar they must have been dissimilar, in which case there would have been three versions. Can we really believe this ? I can not ; Mr. Lang appears to do so, for we find him writing as follows : ' That he (Sir Walter Scott) actually perverted the Elliot into the Scott version of " Jamie Telfer," I do not believe, but he imparted poetic merit to his text.' [1] To what text ? Certainly not to the Elliot text. To the text, then, which he says (*Times* article) was altered by a Scott from the Elliot text. Hence, it is clear that he thinks three versions [2] existed when the *Minstrelsy* was published —firstly, the Elliot version to which Scott referred ;

[1] Introduction to Mr. Farrer's *Literary Forgeries*.

[2] Or four versions, if he does not agree with me as to the identity of the Elliot version referred to by Scott with the version which he himself has termed the Elliot version.

secondly, the version which he believes was altered by a Scott—and in this I certainly agree with him—from the Elliot version; and, thirdly, the Hogg version, which Mr. Lang says Scott did not know of until after the *Minstrelsy* had appeared.

In my opinion there was but one version, the version of which Scott made mention and of which the MS. is still extant. I believe—but I quite admit my belief to be founded not on actual proof but only on strong probability—the Hogg version to have been the same. If it was not, what has happened to it? where is it? Surely one at least of such keen enthusiasts as Scott, Hogg, Leyden, Laidlaw, would have taken the trouble to preserve it.

In *The Trustworthiness of Border Ballads* I expressed the view that all the most beautiful stanzas in the *Minstrelsy* version of 'Jamie Telfer' had been written by Sir Walter Scott—and I believe all the critics of my book agree with me in this; but in the foregoing pages I have gone further and have given reasons for believing that his was the hand which—to use Mr. Lang's words—'perverted the Elliot into the Scott version.' Mr. Lang does not believe this, but he gives no reasons for his disbelief. I hope he will do so, and further, I hope, though I cannot expect, that they will completely dispose of mine.

Was Scott's offence a great one? I am not going

to defend it, but no one ought to pass judgment upon him without first considering another matter. Mr. Lang has expressed the opinion that the original version of the ballad is itself only of modern date ; now, if Scott knew, or believed this to be so, he might have held that there was no serious offence in perverting a ' faked-up ' thing of yesterday.

This terrible suggestion of Mr. Lang's must be examined in another chapter.

NUMBER V

'JAMIE TELFER I' THE FAIR DODHEAD'
IS IT A GENUINE OLD BALLAD?

'JAMIE TELFER I' THE FAIR DODHEAD' IS IT A GENUINE BALLAD?

Suspicion as to the genuineness of this ballad was first aroused in my mind by certain words of Mr. Andrew Lang's. He has said that it is a 'mere late mythical perversion of carefully recorded historical facts,'[1] and also that 'the original balladist must have lived, to use a Hibernianism, long after the events recorded in "Jamie Telfer"—for these events never occurred. What did occur and lent a basis to the ballad, we learn from the despatches of the English officials on the Border in 1596.'[2]

It would seem, then, that Mr. Lang believes the ballad was composed by some one who had been able to consult the English official documents, and consequently that it is of quite modern fabrication. I am in doubt, however, whether this is in truth his opinion, since it is inconsistent with the view he expressed elsewhere as to Sir Walter Scott having obtained the *later* version from tradition.[3]

[1] See *ante*, p. 161.

[2] Introduction to *Literary Forgeries*, p. xxv.

[3] 'The Ballads,' by A. Lang, Chambers's *Cyclopædia of English Literature*, 1901.

Again, I am inclined to infer from his assertion as to the events recorded never having occurred that he believes the ballad to be purely fictitious, but such an interpretation of his words appears to be contradicted by the sentence immediately following them, in which we are told that it is based on facts which did occur.

Perhaps I am wrong in thinking Mr. Lang has suspicions regarding the genuineness of the ballad, but however this may be, he has thoroughly awakened mine, and, seeing that I have already elsewhere made an irresistible attack on the genuineness of the Scott version, I feel myself more or less morally compelled not to shirk examining into that of what he calls the Elliot version.

In *The Trustworthiness of Border Ballads* I remarked that the old version, that is to say the version into the genuineness of which I am about to inquire, appeared to be written wholly by one hand, and, further, that it and some other of the so-called 'riding ballads' bore so strong a resemblance to each other as to give rise to the thought of their all having been composed by the same individual. Though, broadly speaking, this is true, yet the assertion requires some slight modification, for a few lines in 'Jamie Telfer' might be pointed to as having probably been borrowed from older ballads.

I am aware I shall lay myself open to criticism in drawing attention to these. It will be said that they are mere 'commonplaces' or 'recurrent passages' which 'are to the ballad very much what idiomatic phrases are to language'—so we read in the introduction to the Cambridge edition of Professor Child's *English and Scottish Popular Ballads.* We are also told that a balladist, who utilises what are called 'stock stanzas,' 'is not even quoting from an individual predecessor, any more than you and I are when, in the course of conversation, we say "That depends upon circumstances," or "without let or hindrance."'

I shall, nevertheless, remark upon them for two reasons; the first is that I wish to guard against the possibility of being accused of a desire to make a weak case against the 'Elliot' version; and the second reason is that I do not like to refrain from bringing forward matter to which I *do* attach some value, simply because others, however much more capable judges they may be, do not.

Of course it would be absurd to attach much importance to the recurrence in different ballads of pure commonplaces such as 'As fast as he can drie,' but even these may have *some* significance; they may, at least, indicate a period. Thus, the words quoted occur in 'Edom o' Gordon,' three times in

'Dick o' the Cow,' in 'Jock o' the Syde,' in 'The Lochmaben Harper,' and four or five times in 'Adam Bell, Clym of the Cleugh,' all of which ballads refer to very much the same period; it may, then, with some reason be inferred that the phrase was a very favourite one with the ballad-makers of that time, and consequently there is no ground to suspect one writer of borrowing it from another. But, if we were to come across the same line in a ballad purporting to have been written centuries earlier, we should rightly regard it with suspicion.

Sometimes a recurrence of expressions may be significant of ballads having been written by the same hand; sometimes, it clearly signifies plagiarism; sometimes, there is a doubt which. Thus, in 'Jock o' the Syde' and 'Archie o' Ca'field' a river is described as 'running like the sea'—a curious simile to find in Border ballads. I do not know of its occurrence in other ballads, and therefore I have no reason to consider it a 'stock' expression; to my mind, its recurrence in these two ballads suggests identity of authorship or plagiarism.

The occurrence in 'Jock o' the Syde' of the line 'A faint heart ne'er won a fair ladye' shows that the ballad has been, if not actually composed, at all events 'edited' since the publication of King's *Orpheus and Eurydice* in 1704. It does not suggest

plagiarism. But, should one come across a less well-known quotation, suspicion would at once arise.

Let us now examine the ballad of 'Jamie Telfer.'

The very first line, 'It fell about the Martinmas,' reminds one of the opening line of the 'Battle of Otterburn,' 'It fell about the Lamas tyde.' I shall be at once told that this is a mere commonplace —which is true in a sense; I shall also be told that the line is a 'stock' line—from which it is to be inferred that the maker of the ballad relating to a battle in 1388 used the same 'stock' as the maker of a ballad relating to an insignificant raid three centuries later!

I shall further be told that the line is common to many other ballads—but, as a matter of fact, is this the case? I certainly cannot name more than a very few in which it occurs.

Many, perhaps, commence by specifying the time of year in which the occurrences they relate took place, but the question at issue is not as to whether there is a general resemblance in such commonplace statements, but as to whether the particular idiom, 'It fell about,' was a common form used by ballad-makers at the time 'Jamie Telfer' was composed.

A song called 'Barbara Allan,' published in Ramsay's *Tea-Table Miscellany*, 1740, opens thus—

It was in and about the Martinmas time,
When the green leaves were a falling,
That Sir John Graeme, in the West Country,
Fell in love with Barbara Allen.

Again, in 'Captain Car,' a ballad relating to the year 1571, the first stanza runs—

It befell at Martynmas,
When weather waxed colde,
Captain Car said to his men,
We must go take a holde.

These are the only two cases I can name of lines bearing any great resemblance to the first lines of 'Jamie Telfer' and of the 'Battle of Otterburn.' But we should not confine our attention merely to the one line; we should look also at the context. If we do so, we shall admit that there is no resemblance between the two stanzas above quoted, nor between either of them and the first stanza of the 'Battle of Otterburn.' A reader acquainted with the last-named ballad and also with 'Barbara Allan' would not, on reading 'Captain Car' for the first time, be reminded of either.

On the other hand, we must surely admit that the first stanza of 'Jamie Telfer' does recall to mind

both the first stanza of the ‘ Battle of Otterburn ’ and of ‘ Captain Car,’ particularly of an apparently more modern version of the latter, entitled ‘ Edom o’ Gordon,’ in which the first line is made to conform to the phraseology of the ‘ Battle of Otterburn ’ and of ‘ Jamie Telfer.’ The stanza is as follows—

It fell about the Martinmas time,
When the wind blew snell and cauld,
That Adam o’ Gordon said to his men,
Where will we get a hold ?

The first stanza of the ‘ Battle of Otterburn ’ is as follows—

It fell about the Lamas tyde,
When husbands win their hay,
The doughty Douglas bowned him to ride,
In England to take a prey.

Now, if we look at the first stanza of ‘ Jamie Telfer ’ we shall see that the first and third lines are practically identical with the first and third lines of ‘ Edom o’ Gordon,’ and the first and fourth lines with the first and fourth lines of the ‘ Battle of Otterburn.’ The stanza is as follows—

It fell about the Martinmas,
When steeds were fed wi’ corn and hay,
The Captain of Bewcastle said to his lads,
We ’ll into Teviotdale and seek a prey.

In my opinion, then, there is some ground for thinking that the author of 'Jamie Telfer' was acquainted with these two ballads.

We may now pass on to stanza 12, where we find the lines,

> Now Jamie is up the water gate,
> E'en as fast as he can drie.

I have already pointed out that the second line is common to many ballads of this period; consequently its presence here would afford no ground for suspicion were it not coupled with practically the very same line with which it is found in the ballad of 'Hobbie Noble,' which was published in the *Hawick Poetical Museum*, 1784.

> Then Hobbie is down the water gane,
> As fast as he can drie.

Then, again, we have in 'Jamie Telfer' the line 'There was an auld wife ayont the fire,' and in 'Adam Bell' 'There lay an auld wife in that place A little besyde the fyre.'

Many other similarities between 'Jamie Telfer' and older ballads might be pointed out, each, perhaps, of trifling importance by itself; but these trifles, if taken together, constitute a somewhat remarkable difference between 'Jamie Telfer' and other so-called 'riding ballads.' Speaking broadly,

whereas 'Jamie Telfer' has much in common with the others, they have little or nothing in common with each other.[1]

But granting all this, can it be fairly said that the fact that many lines and expressions have been borrowed from other ballads is of sufficient importance to discredit the genuineness of the ballad as a whole? The borrowed lines are probably 'emendations' or insertions to replace missing lines, and if so, they imply genuineness in the stanzas into which they are inserted. They do not affect the general tenor of the ballad—as, for instance, in the case of the ballad of the Battle of Otterburn, where the adoption of stanzas said to have been obtained from recitation gives to the *Minstrelsy* version a signification quite different to that of the version published by Dr. Percy in the *Reliques of Ancient Poetry*.

There is one instance of a probable emendation having, at one time or another, been made in this ballad, to which I think it would be interesting to draw attention, more especially since it somewhat confirms the view as to the ballad being essentially genuine.

[1] This is I think literally true, with the following exceptions: 'Hobbie Noble' and 'Jock o' the Syde' have one line in common, namely, 'As fast as he can drie'; and the words 'he had lived this hundred years' are common to 'Johnnie Armstrong' and 'Dick o' the Cow.'

In *The Trustworthiness of Border Ballads* I wrote (at page 39) that one of the characteristics of old ballads was the frequency of the repetition of words, phrases and lines, and sometimes even of stanzas with but slight verbal variation. As an instance I referred to 'Johnnie Armstrong,' a ballad of thirty-three stanzas, in which the lines,

> 'Grant me my life, my liege, my king!
> And a bonnie gift I 'll gie to thee';

and the stanza,

> 'Away, away, thou traitor strang!
> Out of my sight soon may'st thou be!
> I grantit never a traitor's life,
> And now I 'll not begin with thee,'

are repeated some four or five times.

We find the same thing—with a difference!—in 'Jamie Telfer.'

With reference to Jamie's arrival at Branxholm we read—

> And when he came to Branxholm Ha',
> He shouted loud and cry'd weel hie,
> Till up bespake then auld Buccleugh—
> 'Whae 's this that brings the fray to me?'
> 'It 's I, Jamie Telfer i' the Fair Dodhead,
> And a harried man I think I be;
> There 's naething left i' the Fair Dodhead
> But only wife and children three.'

Almost identical words are used with reference to his arrival at Coultart Cleugh, at Catlock Hill, and at Prickenhaugh, but, in these instances, they are followed by—

'Alaek, wae 's me! . . .
Alack, alack, and wae is me!'
(or 'Alaek, awae, my heart is sair'),

and assistance is given to the harried man.

One would naturally expect, then, that the stanzas above quoted, relating to his arrival at Branxholm, would have been followed by some such words as—

'Alack, wae 's me!' co auld Buccleuch,
'And ay my heart is sair for thee!'

and that Telfer would have been given assistance.

But, in reality, such is not the case at all! The ballad breaks away from the customary adherence to repetition, and, instead of words of sympathy and a promise of aid, we find a stanza containing matter which is in the highest degree improbable.

I pointed out in my book that the allegation that Buccleuch had refused to strike a blow at a party of English raiders, who had insolently ridden some twenty-five miles into Scottish ground and into the very middle of his own territory, was too absurd to be believed; and when remarking on this stanza (see pages 25-26), I suggested that the ballad-maker

might either have misunderstood Buccleuch's action or had wished to throw a stone at a rival clan ; but I am inclined now to think that he never wrote the stanza at all, and that it has been inserted at some later period. In so far as the general story of the ballad is concerned, the stanza is valueless—it is an excrescence which is in no way required—it is a blot, for which I cannot think the original author is responsible. If this view is correct, it proves that the ballad existed before the MS. of the oldest version we possess was written.

Let us now consider the circumstances of the ballad's birth, or rather of its resurrection, for though it claims, presumably, to have been born not long after the occurrences it relates, that is to say towards the end of the sixteenth century, its existence remained unknown until the appearance of the *Minstrelsy* a couple of centuries later, and even then it remained practically hidden until, after the further lapse of eighty years, it was made known to the world by Professor Child.

We cannot say with absolute certainty where it was that the ballad first saw the light, but we do know that the earliest mentioned copy was in the possession of Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd, and therefore there is sound reason for assigning Ettrick Forest as its birthplace. I shall at once be told that Scott

might have come across the ballad in one of his 'raids' into Liddesdale, but had this been the case he would undoubtedly have mentioned the fact. In Chambers's *Encyclopædia*, vol. i. page 681, we read that 'Many of the poems were the fruit of raid after raid into Liddesdale and were in part actually taken down from the living lips of the old men and women who still knew them by heart.' This is, no doubt, the belief which has been instilled into the public by writer after writer, but I challenge any one to name a single original ballad which Sir Walter ever stated he had heard repeated by either old men or women, young men or maidens, either in Liddesdale or anywhere else. I also challenge the writer of the article in Chambers's *Encyclopædia* to name a single ballad or poem obtained by Scott during any of his 'raids' and which were subsequently published.[1]

He might, perhaps, name 'Archie o' Ca'field,' but I know of no sufficient reason for believing Scott acquired it in Liddesdale, and from the introductory note to the ballad in the *Minstrelsy*, the stanzas obtained from recitation were clearly not got till years after the raids.

There is no ground whatever for thinking that 'Jamie Telfer' was discovered in Liddesdale, and

[1] The instance of the ballad of 'Dick o' the Cow' is referred to in the chapter on Otterburn: see *ante*, p. 23, footnote.

yet since it refers to peculiarly stirring events in that district, to the part played by the chief of one of its most important clans and to the death of his son in a successful combat with the English, it is the very one above all others which—if it be truly ancient—we should expect to have been preserved there. I think I am correct in saying that all the other ballads relating to Liddesdale, published in the *Minstrelsy*, were obtained from Liddesdale sources. Mr. Elliot of Redheugh communicated several to Caw's *Poetical Museum* (Hawick, 1784), and, since 'Jamie Telfer' was not one of these, we can but infer either that it did not then exist or that he was not acquainted with a ballad which, relating as it does to the doings of his own ancestors, would have been of peculiar interest to him.

All this seems to me unpleasantly suspicious.

Against this argument, two considerations may be urged. The first is that Dodhead—Jamie Telfer's residence, which was raided by the English—is in Ettrick, and consequently the ballad is as likely to have been preserved there as in Liddesdale. I am afraid this has no weight with me at all; had Dodhead been in some district other than Ettrick, and had the ballad come to light in that district, then perhaps some importance might have been attached to the point; but it is impossible not to look with

suspicion upon every ballad which emanated at this period from the Forest. And besides, as a matter of fact, the ballad is not an Ettrick Forest ballad.

The second consideration is more weighty. The ballad, though it did not make its first appearance in Liddesdale, was clearly, I think, composed by a Liddesdale man—or at all events by some one who was intimately acquainted with that country and whose sympathies were with it. But whoever it was, he knew the country right well. With regard to it, imagination was not called into play. Every locality named fits perfectly the requirements of the narrative, whether in respect of the route followed by the English raiders, or of that taken by Telfer, or of those adopted by the leaders of the Liddesdale men. Again, the movements of the English, of Telfer, and of the Scots, as described in the ballad, are just what might have been expected under the circumstances, and this I am sure would not have been the case had the ballad been purely fictitious. Had it originated in the brain of some ballad-forger, at the close of the eighteenth or at the beginning of the nineteenth century, he would have failed, as completely as did the author of the *Minstrelsy* version, to produce a picture consistent with local geography, or with probability in respect of the movements of the hostile bands.

Again, that it was composed by some one belonging to the district, and, moreover, at a time long before the period when, if spurious, it can have been invented—if invented, no one surely can doubt that it was so very shortly before the publication of the *Minstrelsy*—is clear from several places being referred to by names which were either extinct or rapidly becoming so at that period, for instance, ' Hardhaughswire,' ' Catlock Hill,' ' Pricken Haugh,' and ' Ritter Ford.'

The reference to ' the plain,' across which the raiders are described driving the cattle, is also noteworthy. Generally speaking, the country is peculiarly devoid of plains ; we find haugh-lands, no doubt, and sometimes of considerable extent, but to call them ' plains ' would hardly be appropriate and would be quite unusual. Nevertheless a peculiarly striking instance occurs immediately below the junction of the routes over Mosspaul—by which the English were retiring—and over the high ground, between Hermitage Water and Euse Water, by which, in accordance with the conjecture I made in *The Trustworthiness of Border Ballads*, Simmy Elliot was leading his force when he saw the English driving their prey across ' the plain.' In my book, I made some conjectures as to where this plain could have been ; since writing it, I have been

over the ground and have been impressed with the probability of its having been here. The word does not occur in the ballad by mere accident, by mere phantasy; it is the most appropriate one that could have been used, and its presence is indicative of the author having been intimately acquainted with the country in which the incidents related occurred.

It seems, then, highly probable that the ballad originated in Liddesdale, and consequently the suspicion of its being a forgery, naturally engendered by its having been discovered in Ettrick Forest, is considerably lessened.

I must now pass on to the consideration of another matter which has caused suspicion to arise in my mind, and perhaps in the minds of others, as to the ballad's genuineness.

Why did not Sir Walter Scott publish it? Why did he prefer to adorn and to publish what was clearly a perversion of the original?

Whether it was Sir Walter himself who perverted the text, or whether this was done, as Mr. Lang thinks, by some other 'Scott,' is not material to my present argument, for even if we can induce ourselves to believe that Sir Walter's hand was limited merely to the creation of all the most beautiful and stirring stanzas, he must have been perfectly well aware that the version into which he inserted them was a

'perversion'; no one who will take the trouble of comparing the two versions, which are placed side by side in my book, and of reading my remarks upon them, can doubt this assertion for one moment. I ask, then, Why did Scott prefer to publish the new rather than the old version?

It strikes me as being an act of vandalism—and Sir Walter was an antiquary! That he should have been guilty of such an act is as difficult to believe as if, had he found a Roman helmet at Newstead, he should have thrown it aside into a dust-heap, and then had presented the public with an imitation made at Birmingham, stamped with his clan's crest.

Again, to suggest that Sir Walter may have been influenced to act as he did by the fact that in the older version there happened to be a silly, unpleasing, and evidently untrue anecdote regarding the behaviour, two hundred years previously, of a chief of the clan to which he himself belonged, is surely to suggest that Sir Walter must have been a very poor creature indeed.

But now, supposing, when the ballad first came to his knowledge, he at once perceived it was a fraud, that it was but a composition of the day before, might he not quite well have thrown it aside without committing any offence at all? Most certainly.

But unfortunately, if we accept this conjecture as probable, we have to face the difficulty that Sir Walter, when publishing his ballad in the *Minstrelsy*, ascribed, or allowed to be ascribed, the dishonourable conduct charged against his own chief in the older ballad to another individual. 'No, no!' it will be said, 'the said individual was an imaginary person, to whom was assigned the appellation of "Gibby Elliot of Stobs." No such person existed in the period to which the ballad relates. Sir Walter was probably amused at the story, given in a trashy, newly written poem, regarding an ancestor, and all he did was to take the blame from off the shoulders of a real personage and to place it on to those of an altogether imaginary one.'[1]

In short, the argument here put forward is to the effect that Sir Walter would not have acted as he did, had he believed in the genuineness of the older version, and it is, I think, a strong one.

On the other hand, two points have to be considered. I quite admit the great value of Sir Walter's opinion, but he *might* have been wrong in thinking it a 'newly written poem.' If it was so indeed, we must surely believe that it was composed with a view

[1] This is, doubtless, somewhat of a quibble, for, although 'Gibby Elliot of Stobs' was the person named, the Chief of the Elliots was the person really alluded to.

to its being accepted by him in his collection of ballads, but then, why should the forger have inserted matter highly uncomplimentary to the editor's clan and calculated to make him reject it? If a forgery at all, then, it is not likely to have been a very late one, at the time Sir Walter became acquainted with it.

Again, we have a very solid fact to prove that Sir Walter did *not* hold the view suggested. In his introductory note to the ballad in the *Minstrelsy*, he recorded the existence of the Elliot, *i.e.* the older, version, and this we cannot conceive of his doing had he believed it to be spurious. If he really had believed in the genuineness of the version he published in the *Minstrelsy*, he would never have recorded therein the existence of another version which he believed to be a forgery—and which, if subsequently published, would discredit his own version—without drawing attention to the fact. Sir Walter must be claimed as a witness in favour of the genuineness of the Elliot version.

We are indeed on the horns of a dilemma! Sir Walter's action is to me absolutely inexplicable, and constitutes one of the many mysteries which have surrounded the ballad from the day of its discovery to even the present day.

The Elliot version mentioned by Sir Walter is

never heard of again! In the Forest, prolific of reciters, not even an old woman has ever been heard to sing a line of it! Hogg's copy has never seen the light! For eighty years the only version known to the public is the spurious one published in the *Minstrelsy*!

After that lapse of years, Professor Child published a version which, from the fact that it ascribes the merit of the exploit to the Elliots, it is natural to think *may* be identical with the version mentioned by Sir Walter. The Professor tells us he printed it from a MS. formerly in the possession of Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, and still in existence. He also tells us that it was written about the beginning of the nineteenth century; may we infer—since he told us no more—that he did not recognise the hand-writing? That he was ignorant as to how the MS. fell into Mr. Kirkpatrick Sharpe's hands? Can no information, even now, be given as to these matters, and also as to why it was allowed to remain, for more than three-quarters of a century, hidden from the eager search of ballad-hunters?

Surely much that is suspicious might be cleared away; until this is done, an unpleasant feeling of doubt will of necessity remain. I confess the more I study ballad literature, the greater grows my difficulty in understanding the minds of the writers;

they seem to me to be inclined rather to bolster up myths than to uproot what is false and misleading. One often hears it said that little interest is taken nowadays in the old ballads, and this is perfectly true. But why ? Is it because we are less interested in our ancestors, or in antiquarian subjects, than our fathers were ? I do not believe it in the least. When the *Minstrelsy* was published great interest was aroused, because the ballads in it claiming to be ancient were generally looked upon by the public as being so. Such is no longer the case ; so much doubt has been thrown upon the genuineness of a few, that the whole of those published in that work for the first time have been somewhat discredited—and the charm has gone. The charm of a ballad chiefly lies in its being a genuine picture of events, or of ideas, of bygone times, drawn by one who had lived in those times ; restore the charm, and the interest may return. This is what writers upon ballads should aim at, and they should bear in mind that whereas there may be much to be said on behalf of Sir Walter Scott and others of his time for such deceptions as they may have been guilty of, there is nothing to be said for writers of the present day who try to perpetuate these deceptions.

The most beautiful and stirring stanzas of the *Minstrelsy* version of ' Jamie Telfer ' have frequently

been adduced by many of our best-known authors of works on ballads as evidence of poetic genius, of power to impart to verse an extraordinary vividness, a blood-stirring spirit, having flourished, centuries ago, amongst the Scottish Borderers—and yet, 'Nor harp, nor pipe, their ear could please like the loud slogan yell!' Whether this view be correct or not need not be discussed here, but, in so far as it is founded on the stanzas in 'Jamie Telfer,' it is unsound, since these were written by Scott and inserted into a ballad which had been obtained by perverting an older one.

I fully believe that the writers of the works I have alluded to wrote in perfectly good faith and in complete confidence of the genuineness of the ballad as a whole and of the stanzas in particular; but I cannot altogether excuse them for holding a belief which only a little investigation would have shown to be wrong.

Mr. Henderson, I think, in his edition of the *Minstrelsy*, suggested that these stanzas, or some of them, had been touched up by Sir Walter, but, so far as I know, no one ever asserted that they had been actually composed by him until, in 1906, I did so myself; nevertheless in 1907 Mr. Lang, the author of the chapter on ballad forgeries in *Literary Forgeries*, wrote that almost any reader could detect that fact

himself. Does he really think, then, that the many writers who have referred with admiration to the poetic genius of the ancient ballad-maker, the unknown creator of these stanzas, were humbugs, or does he think that, in failing to ' detect the hand of the master,' they proved themselves more dense than ' almost any reader ' could have been ? He has written much on ballads ; has he ever before drawn attention to the error into which so many authors have fallen ?

And now what answer is to be made to the question forming the title to this paper ?

The three chief reasons I have given for doubting the genuineness of the old version of this ballad are : (1) the occurrence in it of lines common to other ballads ; (2) the fact that the only known MS. copy came to light in Ettrick Forest at a time when ballads were being eagerly sought for—and supplied; and (3) the fact of its not having been published by Sir Walter Scott, and of its lying concealed from public knowledge for three-quarters of a century.

With regard to (1), I have shown that the presence of the lines tell rather in favour of the genuineness of the ballad as a whole than otherwise.

With regard to (2), I have endeavoured to show that the ballad probably originated in the district to which it refers, and if this is true the fact more than

counterbalances the other fact, namely of the MS. having come first to light in Ettrick Forest.

With regard to (3), I have said that the fact of Sir Walter not publishing the ballad points to his having believed it to be spurious, but this consideration is outweighed by Sir Walter's own note recording its existence, thereby testifying to his belief in its genuineness. The ballad having remained hidden for so many years and so little information regarding it having been made known, hardly form grounds for suspicion. The fact, however, is somewhat mysterious, and mystery breeds suspicion.

I have done my utmost to prove the ballad to be a forgery, and, in my opinion, I have failed; I do not think I shall be accused of having kept back matter calculated to tell against its genuineness, while it is not improbable I may be thought to have pressed too strongly those points which do so. This is a difficulty a prejudiced writer—and I admit I may be classed as one, since it would pain me much to think the ballad in question is other than genuine—has necessarily to contend with; in order to guard against an accusation of partiality, he is inclined to exaggerate the value of the evidence which tells against his own inclinations. Taking into consideration all the arguments I have used in this paper, as well as those in the chapter on the origin of the ballad,

my answer to the question is, Yes, 'Jamie Telfer i' the Fair Dodhead' is a genuine old ballad.

I shall not, however, quarrel with those who take a different view, not even should they hold that my judgment is inconsistent with the evidence I have myself adduced. They would be perfectly justified in saying I am a prejudiced judge, and they may well find great difficulty in mastering their suspicions with regard to the ballad. It came, so far as we know, from a tainted source; it was itself the mother of the 'perversion' published in the *Minstrelsy*, and this again was the stable companion, so to speak, of 'Kinmont Willie,' of the Scottish version of the 'Battle of Otterburn,' and of 'Auld Maitland,' not to mention others to which no reference has been made in this volume. We cannot but be influenced unpleasantly by the ballad's surroundings, and I shall find no fault with those who let their suspicions outweigh my reasoning.

If the ballad is in truth genuine, the blame for unjust suspicions having arisen rests upon those who, at the time of its discovery, were too indifferent to take proper steps to verify its authenticity, and who knowingly, or without sufficient investigation, on several occasions passed off modern productions as ancient ballads. Herein lies the chief mischief of such so-called 'forgeries'; it may be true, as Sir

Walter Scott says, that 'the public is more enriched by the contribution than injured by the deception,' but, if so, it is true only as regards each individual ballad, for the injury caused by the deception does not end with it; when the truth is discovered, suspicion is sure to arise with regard to other ballads which may be perfectly genuine.

Had 'Jamie Telfer' been published at the same time as 'Dick o' the Cow' and other Liddesdale ballads, no suspicion would, I think, have arisen with regard to it.

'Company, villainous company, hath been the spoil of me.'

NUMBER VI

'AULD MAITLAND'

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Even at the time of its birth, even before it was published to the world, suspicion as to the genuineness of this ballad had been aroused. That after a period of more than a hundred years this suspicion should still exist, that it should neither have been allayed nor confirmed, does not say much for the powers of investigation inherent in our literary critics, and yet Sir Walter Scott, not to mention other great authorities on ballads, has told us that there is never any difficulty in detecting an imitation. Though this opinion may be a slight exaggeration, I believe it to be generally true, and certainly there is no very great difficulty, in the case before us, of forming a true judgment. How, then, does it happen that two great authorities on ballad literature, Professor Child on the one hand, and Mr. Andrew Lang on the other, hold diametrically opposite views regarding it? I think the reason must be that the matter has never been thoroughly thrashed out; Professor Child gives no reason, so far as I know,

in support of his opinion, though presumably he must have considered the question thoroughly before excluding the ballad from his great collection, while Mr. Lang attempts little more than to prove that the ballad could not have been composed by Hogg—he does not really tackle the question.[1]

In the following pages I shall endeavour to place before the reader all that occurs to my mind in favour of either view, and then, without fear or partiality, let us determine, according to the best of our understanding, on which side lies the truth.

In the first place let us see what, if any, evidence of a suspicious nature exists in the ballad itself, and whether it points to any particular individual having taken part in a deception.

Sir Walter Scott pointed out at the very commencement of his introductory note to the ballad that its *appearance* did not give it a claim to high antiquity, but, I ask, in what respect does it not do so? Sir Walter, although he writes that the date of the ballad cannot be ascertained with any degree of certainty, suggests that it was composed with

[1] See *Literary Forgeries*, by J. A. Farrer (Longmans, Green and Co., 1907). The introduction, and also that portion of the chapter on Ballad-forgers which relates to 'Auld Maitland,' were written by Mr. Lang.

reference to, and presumably shortly after, certain events which occurred in Lauderdale about the year 1296. Now, the MSS. in the Harleian Library supply us with the following two scraps of song relating to the same occurrences: 'The battle of Dunbar was fought and won by the earl of Warenne, the 28th of April 1296; "and tho seide the Englisshemen in reprefe of the Scottis,

Thus scaterand Scottis,
Holde I for sootis,
Of wrenchis unware;
Eerly in a mornyng,
In an evyl tyding,
Went ye froo Dunbarre."'

The Scots, on the other hand, said that 'King Edward went him toward Berwyke, and biseged the toune and tho that were withyn manlich hem defended, and sett on fire and brent ij of the king Edwarde shippes, and seide in dispite and reprefe of him—

Wend kyng Edwarde with his lange shankes,
To have gote Berwyke al our unthankes?
Gas pikes hym, and gas dikes hym.'[1]

The style of these scraps is certainly as different as

[1] Ritson's *Ancient Songs and Ballads*, p. xxxviii. (Third edition, by W. C. Hazlitt. London, 1877.)

can well be conceived from that of 'Auld Maitland,' and we are consequently inclined at first to agree that the appearance of the latter does not give it a claim to antiquity; but we ought to remember that the verses above quoted have been printed, or have been in the form of MS. for centuries, whereas 'Auld Maitland' claims to have been handed down for a like period orally. Considering the change of language which must necessarily take place as centuries roll by, considering that each generation of reciters is certain to forget words and stanzas, replacing them by others, bearing a like sense, of their own, we cannot, I think, contend that the general appearance of this ballad materially weakens its claim to antiquity; this may, however, be weakened by an examination into details.

Writing in June 1802, that is to say before the date of certain occurrences which throw justifiable suspicion on its genuineness, Hogg wrote to Scott that he was surprised some people suspected the song of being a modern forgery.[1]

It would be interesting to know to whom Hogg was referring, and also the grounds for their suspicion; whatever these may have been, they did not

[1] See prefatory note to 'Auld Maitland.' In Cadell's edition (1833) the date of Hogg's letter is shown as 30th June 1801, but this is apparently incorrect.

suffice to shake Scott's faith, or, if they did so, he must soon afterwards have obtained some evidence to make him resume it.

What is there in the ballad itself likely to have raised suspicion in the minds of these sceptics ?

First of all, some historical inaccuracies are observable ; but surely these would not have done so, for a narrative, especially one in the form of verse, is almost certain, even at the time of its conception, not to be in strict accordance with fact in all points, and it is quite certain, after being handed down orally for centuries, to be remote from it in many. We ought not to look for more than a hazy, inaccurate, ill-connected account, suggestive, but no more than suggestive, to our minds of events recorded in history—and this much we do find in 'Auld Maitland' ; had it been more true to history, it would, in my opinion, have been more open to suspicion.

The next point to be observed is that though the poetic merit of the ballad is maintained at a fairly uniform level all through, there are occasional lines, and even stanzas, which jar in style to such a degree as to raise the thought that they must have been written by two separate hands.

The best stanzas, to my taste, are 8, 9, 10 and 11, and the worst are 15 and 18.

The first four are as follows—

8

They lighted on the banks of Tweed,
And blew their coals sae het,
And fired the Merse and Teviotdale,
All in an evening late.

9

As they fared up o'er Lammermoor,
They burn'd baith up and down,
Until they came to a darksome house,
Some call it Leader-town.

10

'Wha hauds this house?' young Edward cry'd,
'Or what gies't ower to me?'
A grey-hair'd knight set up his head,
And crackit richt crously:

11

'Of Scotland's king I haud my house;
He pays me meat and fee;
And I will keep my guid auld house,
While my house will keep me.'

The latter two stanzas, 15 and 18, are—

15

Then fifteen barks, all gaily good,
Met them upon a day,
Which they did lade with as much spoil
As they could bear away.

. . . . . .

18

Until he came into that town,
  Which some call Billop-Grace :
There were auld Maitland's sons, a' three,
  Learning at school, alas !

There cannot be much doubt that two versifiers have been at work here ; let us see if we can recognise either.

Footnotes to the ballad tell us that Hogg wrote two separate couplets, from which information we are justified in assuming that we are intended to understand that they represent the total of his handiwork in the construction of the ballad. Can we believe this ? Can we believe he was too scrupulous to remain silent with regard to filling up two small gaps in a ballad of sixty-five stanzas ? Can we believe that his views in this respect were so Ritsonian, that he stood on a far higher moral level than Sir Walter Scott, who never hesitated to interpolate lines and stanzas and series of stanzas when he saw his way to improving the artistic merit of a song ? [1] Few will doubt that the footnotes were inserted with the object of leading the public to think that

[1] In Lockhart's *Life of Scott*, vol. i. p. 380, we read : 'He had, I firmly believe, interpolated hardly a line or even an epithet of his own' into any of the ballads published in the *Minstrelsy*. It is curious, perhaps sad, that an intellect so acute as Lockhart's, should have been blinded thus by an excessive enthusiasm for one well worthy of high admiration.

Hogg made no other interpolations; but, I am afraid I must go further than this and say that, since they were inserted on the editor's responsibility, the intention must have been to make it appear as if no other interpolations by any other hand had been inserted.

Well, as we have reason to believe that Hogg wrote other lines than the four he owned to, it may be worth while to try to pick them out. Read stanza 7, the last couplet of which is admittedly Hogg's—

> And thrice as many as Berwicke
> Were all for battle bound,
> *Who marching forth with false Dunbar,*
> *A ready welcome found.*

Then let us read the whole ballad and ask ourselves which stanzas resemble in style the above couplet of Hogg's. We shall be suspicious of eight or nine, but chiefly so of stanzas 15 and 18 — already quoted; in my opinion, there are none more likely than these to have been composed by him. Now these, together with stanza 17, are the very ones which transfer the scene of the story from Scotland to France. Strike them out, and in the rest of the ballad there is nothing—save in stanza 62—inconsistent with the whole scene having been enacted in the south of Scotland, before one castle, and at the

same period. Sir Walter remarks, in note C to the ballad, that 'the rapid change of scene from Scotland to France excites suspicion, that some verses may have been lost in this place.' In my mind, however, the suspicion arises that the stanzas relating to France have been interpolated.

There are two references to France—or three, if we believe that 'Billop-Grace,' in stanza 18, is a corruption of the name of some French town—one of which definitely lays the scene in that country, the other implies it; there are also three references to the 'lads of France.' Now, if I can prove one of these references to have been written by Hogg, it will go a long way towards inclining us to think that the others were also—it will at least shake our faith in their genuineness.

I must point out that the first couplet of stanza 43, 'But we are nane the lads o' France, Nor e'er pretend to be'—(which bears a remarkable resemblance to the lines in the 'Battle of Philiphaugh,' 'No, we are nane o' Montrose's men, Nor e'er intend to be')—was the very one which convinced Scott that the ballad was not a forgery—so Hogg tells us in his 'Lines to Sir Walter Scott, Bart.' He reminded Scott that as he heard his mother sing these words his doubts, as to the genuineness of the ballad, doubts to clear up which had

been the object of his visit to Hogg, vanished. 'Thy fist made all the table ring, By G——, sir, but that is the thing!' From this we may be certain that the stanza was very much to Hogg's taste—probably because it was his own child!—but why should it have appealed to Scott, the antiquarian? In what way does it point to antiquity? I can understand the sentiment, which is one of disgust at being taken for Frenchmen, appealing to the vulgar in the early years of the nineteenth century, when Scotland, then a portion of Great Britain, had been for many years at war with France, but surely it is somewhat out of place in the mouth of a Scot at a period when the two countries were closely allied. But the point to which I wish to draw particular attention is that the verse was clearly new to Sir Walter. It must, then, have been introduced into the ballad between the time when he first saw it, when his suspicions were aroused, and the time when he heard it sung, when his suspicions were, it is said, dispelled. That it was introduced at Hogg's instance, who can doubt? That such an interpolation should truly have deceived Sir Walter and have caused his suspicions to vanish is inconceivable.

Let us now pass on to the second interpolation admittedly made by Hogg in stanza 46. It com-

mences with the words, 'Remember Percy'—a form of address seldom found in ballads and calling to mind the words: 'But trust me, Percy'—in stanza 22 of 'Chevy-Chase' (Herd's version). Now, the very next stanza in 'Auld Maitland' has also a resemblance to another stanza in 'Chevy-Chase': they are as follows:—

47 of Auld Maitland

He clanked Piercy ower the head,
A deep wound and a sair,
Till the best blood o' his bodie
Came rinning down his hair.

32 of Chevy-Chase
(which also refers to a struggle with a Percy)

They fought until they both did sweat
With swords of temper'd steel;
Until the blood like drops of rain
They trickling down did feel.

Then, in stanza 4 of 'Auld Maitland' occurs the line 'If fifteen hundred waled wight men,' and in stanza 6 of 'Chevy-Chase' we have, 'With fifteen hundred bow-men bold, All chosen men of might.'

Again, stanza 27 of 'Auld Maitland' runs—

Then, lifting up a gilt dagger,
Hung low down by his knee,
He stabb'd the knight the standard bore,
He stabb'd him cruellie:

and in the ' Battle of Otterbourne ' (Herd's version) we have—

> The boy 's taen out his little penknife,
> That hanget low down by his gare,
> And he gae Earl Douglas a deadly wound,
> Alack ! a deep wound and a sare.

The last line is identical with the second line of stanza 47 of ' Auld Maitland,' already quoted.

A few other lines in ' Auld Maitland ' reminding one of lines in ' Chevy-Chase ' or the ' Battle of Otterbourne ' might also be mentioned.

My object in calling attention to these similarities is to suggest that as Hogg admittedly wrote a part of stanza 46, calling to mind the ballad of ' Chevy-Chase,' he is probably responsible for the stanza immediately following, as well as all others which also put one in mind of that ballad.

Now, although I have shown grounds for the suspicion that Hogg is responsible for the presence in ' Auld Maitland ' of the stanzas having reference to France, as well as of those which seem to be taken from, or to be based upon, ' Chevy-Chase,' yet he cannot be considered so with regard to some other lines which greatly resemble lines in ballads other than ' Chevy-Chase.' Thus the line (stanza 6) ' King Edward rade, king Edward ran,' reminds one of the line in ' Jamie Telfer,' ' The Scotts they rode, the Scotts they ran ' ; but it would not have been

suggested to Hogg by the latter, which occurs only in the *Minstrelsy* version of 'Jamie Telfer,' not in the original version, which I have already shown[1] good reason for believing was the version possessed by Hogg. *If* Hogg is responsible for the insertion of this line into 'Auld Maitland,' he must have borrowed it from 'Edom o' Gordon,' where we have 'Sum they rode and sum they ran,' but from this source also must the author of the stanza in the *Minstrelsy* version of 'Jamie Telfer' have borrowed it! and he was certainly Scott himself.[2] Since it is highly improbable that both Hogg and Scott should have borrowed the same line, there is better reason for thinking that its presence in 'Auld Maitland' is due to Scott rather than to Hogg.

Again, compare stanza 21, which is as follows—

> Then they hae saddled twa black horse,
> Twa black horse and a gray;
> And they are on to King Edward's host,
> Before the dawn of day—

with stanza 21 of Scott's version of 'Jamie Telfer,' which runs—

> He 's set his twa sons on coal-black steeds,
> Himsell upon a freckled gray,
> And they are on wi' Jamie Telfer,
> To Branksome Ha' to tak the fraye.

[1] See essay On the Genesis of the Ballads of 'Jamie Telfer' and 'Auld Maitland.'

[2] See *The Trustworthiness of Border Ballads*, p. 49.

The corresponding stanza in the *original* version of 'Jamie Telfer,' that is to say the version possessed by Hogg, has no resemblance whatever. We must surely admit, then, that the probability of Hogg having composed the stanza in 'Auld Maitland' is less than of Scott having done so.

Again, in stanza 24 we have the line, 'A knight me gat, a lady bore.' The same occurs in the *Minstrelsy* version of 'Young Tamlane,' which was published at the same time as 'Auld Maitland.' The line does not occur in the fragment of the same ballad published by Herd in 1774 under the title of 'Kerton Ha'' ; it occurs, however, in the 'Childe of Elle,' which was published in Percy's *Reliques*, etc., in 1765, and very possibly in other and older ballads. That it has, then, been interpolated into 'Auld Maitland' seems fairly clear, where, moreover, it appears somewhat out of place in reply to the question, 'Where wast thou bred ? where wast thou born ? ' Indeed, a similar remark might be made with regard to its occurrence in 'Young Tamlane,' where it follows in reply to the question, 'Gin e'er ye was in haly chapel, Or sained in Christentie ? ' In the 'Childe of Elle,' however, the line is quite appropriate ; the father of the heroine calls the hero a 'False churl's son,' and receives the reply, 'A knight me got, and a ladye me bore, Soe never did

none by thee.' If my suspicion of the line having been interpolated is true, this is more likely to have been done by Scott, the editor, or perhaps I should say the compiler, of 'Young Tamlane,'[1] who was well acquainted with Percy's *Reliques* and others of a like nature, than by the 'illiterate' Hogg.

And, lastly, with regard to the lines,

We are nane o' {the lads o' France, / Montrose's men,
Nor e'er {pretend / intend} to be,

which occur in 'Auld Maitland' and in the 'Battle of Philiphaugh'—since both ballads were published at the same time I am unable to say which borrowed from the other, but, in my opinion, the lines fit more appropriately into the latter than the former ballad. I ought not, however, to have introduced this case into my present argument, which is directed to the consideration of what cause for suspicion of forgery could have existed in the minds of those to whom the ballad had been submitted early in 1802, *i.e.* before the publication of the 'Battle of Philiphaugh'—as we are told by Hogg's letter of June 30 of that year.

The conclusion which would probably have been

[1] Sir Walter mentions in the *Minstrelsy* that this ballad had been prepared from a collation of printed copies, etc.

arrived at with regard to these interpolations, would, I think, have been to the effect that Hogg had made some, and Scott some.

That there were a certain number of interpolations, and by more hands than one, would surely have been admitted, but would not this have been calculated to reduce somewhat any suspicion that might have arisen regarding the whole being a fabrication ?—for the interpolation of a line into a stanza inclines one to think that in other respects the stanza is genuine, and the interpolation of complete stanzas inclines one to believe that the ballad as a whole is genuine.

Now that we have closely examined the construction of the ballad, let us put to ourselves the following question—assuming the ballad to have been as we now know it at the time of its submission to those who, as Hogg mentioned in his letter of June 30, 1802, suspected it of being a forgery, can we say there existed good grounds for such a suspicion ? In my opinion there were not.

We must now consider certain peculiar circumstances which attended the first appearance of the ballad.

Those who agree with the conclusion just arrived at, namely, that little or no reason existed prior to June 30, 1802, to suspect forgery, must surely feel surprise at this ugly word having been then

mentioned. When and by whom was it first used ?

Hogg used it in the letter of the above date, but he was referring to a prior use of it, presumably by his correspondent, Scott.

Hogg does not say who the persons were to whom the ballad had been shown ; perhaps he did not know ; possibly they were non-existent—for it would not have been unnatural on Scott's part had he, in the event of his suspecting the genuineness of the ballad and not wishing to affront Hogg by frankly saying so, informed him that 'some people' took it to be a forgery. That Sir Walter was, or had been, suspicious regarding it we know from Hogg's account of Scott's visit to him on the occasion of his mother's chanting the ballad ; he says distinctly that the visit was with the object of clearing up suspicions of forgery which were in Scott's mind. Who could 'the some persons' of Hogg's letter have been ? Ellis certainly could not have been one ; perhaps Leyden might ; but I am inclined to think they were mythical. However this may be, so far as we know, the word 'forgery' was first whispered in connection with this ballad between Scott and Hogg, between the two who, in my opinion, unquestionably inserted the interpolations already mentioned.

Mr. Lang, in discussing the authenticity of the ballad, draws attention to curious differences in the accounts given by Sir Walter Scott of how he obtained it; but then, instead of pursuing this point, he directs his batteries solely on Hogg, and finally proves, to his own satisfaction, that the latter was not the author of the ballad.

After attempting to identify the individuals from whom Mrs. Hogg and others professed to have learned the ballad, he writes that 'it is highly improbable that James Hogg first forged it and then made old people learn it by rote,' and again, further on, he says, 'Such then was the unequalled astuteness of Hogg, if so early as 1802 and so unversed in literature as he then was, he forged the ballad, and induced old people to learn it by heart and recite it. The whole trick seems impossible. . . .' The fact, also, that Hogg never boasted of having hoaxed Scott with this ballad, as he did Jeffrey with another, appears to have weight with Mr. Lang. (See *Literary Forgeries*, p. 255, etc.)

We may admit that, if Hogg was unversed in literature, the probability is strong against his having composed the whole ballad unaided. But why should he not have received aid? Could he not have been aided by Scott? No, it will be said, because they were not acquainted with each other

until after Scott had heard of the existence of the ballad. As to this, I have already shown in a previous chapter, there is no certainty ; but putting Scott aside, why should he not have obtained his knowledge from elsewhere ? As early as 1801 [1] Leyden was helping Scott in collecting materials for the *Border Minstrelsy*, and we may be sure that he, the son of a shepherd in Teviotdale, quickly became acquainted with the shepherd of Ettrick. I do not suggest that Leyden assisted in the forgery—if forgery there was—and I am merely pointing out that Hogg might have obtained from him sufficient information to enable him to compose the ballad. Those who argue that Hogg was too illiterate to have done so must explain how he happens to have been the author of the couplet in stanza 7,[2] referring to a matter of history not at all widely known. No illiterate man wrote this couplet without assistance, and the illiterate Hogg wrote it. Whence did he get his knowledge ? And why should he not have heard of 'sowies' and 'springalds' from the same source ? [3]

Again, I admit the great improbability of Hogg

[1] *Dictionary of National Biography* : see Leyden.

[2] Quoted on p. 226.

[3] Scott, in his introductory note to 'Auld Maitland,' refers particularly to these words, which occur in stanzas 12 and 13, as evidence of the antiquity of the ballad.

having induced old people to learn the ballad by heart and to recite it. But what evidence exists of their having done so? In the introductory note to the ballad, Scott writes that it 'has been preserved by tradition'—'is only known to a few old people on the banks of the Ettrick'—'is published, as written down from the recitation of Mrs. Hogg.' He does not say that he had heard people recite it, nor that it was he himself who had taken it down from recitation; it would seem as if he intentionally avoided saying so, nor do I know of his ever having definitely so stated in subsequent writings. Hogg's statement that Scott heard his mother recite it is precise, but he nowhere, so far as I know, tells us of Scott—or of any one else save himself—having heard any one else recite it. Scott, no doubt, by not correcting Hogg's account tacitly confirmed it, and he also made himself responsible for the truth of the details mentioned in the *Minstrelsy*.[1]

But putting Scott and his fellow ballad-hunters of 1801-3 aside altogether, has any one of the many antiquarians and ballad-seekers, who have overrun

[1] After giving, in the introductory note to the ballad, an extract from Hogg's letter in which amongst other matters it is stated that 'most of the old people hereabouts have a great part of the ballad by heart,' Scott adds the following lines: 'To the observations of my ingenious correspondent I have nothing to add, but that, in this, and a thousand other instances, they accurately coincide with my personal knowledge.'

the Borders of Scotland both before and after the publication of the *Minstrelsy*, ever recorded having heard 'Auld Maitland'—or indeed any other original ballad [1]—recited by young or old, male or female, residing in the district ?

Mr. Lang, on the assumption that the ballad was in truth known to various persons, remarks naturally enough that it is improbable Hogg should have induced them to learn it ; but surely it is even more improbable for this long, and not particularly interesting, ballad to have been handed down for centuries, and to come to light not in Lauderdale, where the scene is chiefly laid and to which district the heroes and their posterity belonged, but in another part of the country, under the very noses of the ballad-hunters engaged preparing the *Minstrelsy*, and then again to sink into darkness.

[1] Professor Veitch mentions having obtained the copy of what he considers to be the original version of 'The Dowie Dens' from an old man of over seventy, who had heard his mother and grandmother recite it. But the grandmother—who had a fine ear for music—had a copy of the song, so it cannot be said to have been handed down purely by recitation. See *History and Poetry of the Scottish Border*, vol. ii. p. 197. Sir Walter Scott also, in a letter to Charles Carpenter, mentions that 'old people on the Borders had preserved many ballads descriptive of the manners of the country during the wars with England'—(Lockhart's *Life*, vol. i. p. 379), but he gives us no information as to new 'old ballads' being obtained by recitation. 'Dick o' the Cow,' which he heard sung by 'Auld Thomas Elliot o' Tuzzilehope' (see *Life*, vol. i. p. 197), had already been published in the *Hawick Poetical Museum*.

Mr. Lang's last point is that Hogg never boasted of having hoaxed Scott, as he assuredly would have done had he been the forger. But this argument has point only on the assumption that Scott *was* deceived by Hogg, and this I cannot admit. Scott had suspicions that the ballad was a forgery; he visited Hogg for the express purpose of investigating the matter; he heard an old woman repeat a somewhat trumpery stanza that had been interpolated into the song since he last saw it—and his suspicions vanished! I cannot myself conceive how any one can contend that Scott was, in truth, deceived. If sound reasons can be given to show that he really was so, and *if* we agree as to Hogg's inevitably yielding to his boastful nature, then, but not till then, can we admit that the inference can be reasonably drawn that Hogg was not the forger. In the meantime, it might fairly be argued that the fact of Hogg not having boasted of hoaxing Scott points to the latter having been a participant in the hoax.

On the whole I do not think Mr. Lang has been successful in clearing Hogg of suspicion, still less do I think he has shown reason for believing Professor Child was too sceptical when he rejected the ballad, for the Professor's opinion might have been formed quite irrespective of suspicions against Hogg.

Mr. Lang, who is disposed to believe that the

ballad is a literary imitation, earlier than the eighteenth century, by members of the Maitland family—though he gives no reason for his holding this view, other than that the Maitlands were an accomplished set of men—is 'convinced the Ettrick Shepherd was not the forger, and no other modern artist can be, or has been, suggested as the sinner.'[1] I must take exception to these words, for, in my opinion, another artist can be and indeed has been suggested as 'the sinner' by Mr. Lang himself, when he draws attention, as has already been noticed, to the two different accounts given by Scott of how he obtained the ballad.

To assert that the same individual gave different accounts regarding the manner in which he had obtained a document alleged to be forged *is* to direct suspicion against that individual, more especially when, as in this instance, he was the person who passed the document on to the public.

Again, to say that a document is a forgery is surely to suggest that the person who issued it may have been a participant in the offence, and 'Auld Maitland' has been, rightly or wrongly, termed a forgery, and Sir Walter was undoubtedly the first person who issued it. From the moment that doubt as to its genuineness was expressed, suspicion

[1] Introduction to *Literary Forgeries*, p. xxi.

must have been directed against those who were chiefly instrumental in publishing it, and until good reasons are produced to prove that it is not a forgery, suspicion, possibly no doubt unjust suspicion, will necessarily remain upon them.

If we really wish to form a just, a useful conclusion on the subject, we must, quite irrespective of persons, examine all suspicious circumstances attendant upon it, and it would indeed be curious if, in so doing, we were not occasionally to come across something to suggest the thought that the individual who had introduced the ballad to the public may have possessed more complete knowledge of its genesis than he has revealed to us. It will never do to put these matters aside on the ground that Sir Walter is above suspicion—if we do, we shall never get at the truth. And, indeed, however high our admiration for Sir Walter's character may be, there can be no reason why we should pretend he was endowed with a virtue which he barely admitted to be a virtue at all! Referring to those who have written imitations of ancient poetry with the purpose of passing them off for ancient, Scott wrote thus: 'There is no small degree of cant in the violent invectives with which impostors of this nature have been assailed. . . . If a young, perhaps a female author chooses to circulate a beautiful poem,

we will suppose that of "Hardyknute," under the disguise of antiquity, the public is surely more enriched by the contribution than injured by the deception. It is hardly possible, indeed, without a power of poetical genius, and acquaintance with ancient language and manners possessed by very few, to succeed in deceiving those who have made this branch of literature their study. . . . A minute acquaintance with ancient customs, and with ancient history, is also demanded, to sustain a part which, as it must rest on deception, cannot be altogether an honourable one.'[1]

Scott's attack on Ritson for the latter's objection to 'the liberties which Dr. Percy (the editor of *Reliques of Ancient Poetry*) had taken with his materials, in adding to, retrenching, and improving them, so as to bring them nearer to the taste of his own period,'[2] is well worth reading by those who wish to understand Scott's feelings on the subject.

To us it no doubt seems curious that he should, especially in his later years, have written in palliation of literary imposture, but probably it did not seem so to his contemporaries.

[1] Essay on 'Imitations of the Ancient Ballad,' *Scott's Poetical Works* (1833 edition), vol. iv. pp. 16-17.

[2] 'Remarks on Popular Poetry,' *Scott's Poetical Works*, vol. i. p. 47, etc.

It is also curious that he should have professed such a strong belief in the difficulty of passing off spurious ballads as authentic. He writes: 'I have only met, in my researches into these matters, with one poem, which, if it had been produced as ancient, could not have been detected on internal evidence. . . . It was the composition of an Eton schoolboy.'[1] And yet how many spurious ballads did he not publish in the *Minstrelsy*! It was long even before he would admit that the 'Flowers of the Forest' was not ancient!

Sir Walter apparently closed his eyes to the fact that while only a few people were capable of producing a good imitation, still fewer were able to detect one; his blindness in this respect may be some excuse for him, since, when passing off verses of his own composition as ancient, he might have argued to himself that the act being patent was no offence.

Conclusion

Although I have said that the interpolations made into this ballad, taken by themselves, tell neither for nor against its claim to be essentially of ancient

[1] Essay on the 'Imitations of the Ancient Ballad,' *Scott's Poetical Works* (1833 edition), vol. iv. p. 19.

composition, yet when we look at them in connection with other circumstances they appear to weaken it very materially.

Suspicion regarding them is greatly aggravated by the fact that Sir Walter Scott, when publishing the ballad, owned to only two, both by the same hand, whereas there are clearly several, by more than one hand—his own being almost certainly one. That there has been an attempt to deceive is palpable, and with what object other than to lead the public to believe wrongly in the genuineness of the ballad it is impossible to imagine.

Then we are told in Hogg's letter of the 30th June 1801 (or 1802) to Scott that some people believed the ballad to be a forgery; we are told that Scott himself was suspicious of it; we are told of the steps taken to dispel his suspicions—and we refuse to believe a sensible man could possibly have been influenced by such foolery!

The circumstances connected with the actual discovery of the ballad—into which I have not entered in this chapter, having already done so in that entitled 'On the genesis of the ballads of "Jamie Telfer" and "Auld Maitland"'—are truly extraordinary. The particulars mentioned by Scott to Ellis certainly warranted great 'surprise'; so also do those related by him in the *Minstrelsy*; and

so also do those related by Hogg. In the chapter alluded to, I have endeavoured to clear Scott of the charge of having given inconsistent accounts, but, though they are not necessarily *inconsistent*, they are so far from being precise that we cannot say either when, or where, or how, or from whom, this ballad, which, if genuine, is of most remarkable interest, was first obtained.

Taking into consideration, also, Sir Walter's handling of other ballads, and remembering his defence of those who have taken liberties in adding to, retrenching, and improving ancient songs, it is impossible to assert that there is any improbability in the suggestion that he himself assisted in the composition of 'Auld Maitland.'

In the chapter on the ballad of the Battle of Otterburn I made some remarks regarding the reliability to be placed on ballads derived, as 'Auld Maitland' is alleged to have been, from oral recitation, and I said that none such ought to be accepted as genuine without close examination, for the presumption lay the other way.

We have examined this ballad, and we have found nothing in the least calculated to override this presumption; on the other hand, we have gone closely into the circumstances surrounding its birth, and have found much to confirm it.

It follows, therefore, that, in my opinion, the ballad ought to be adjudged a forgery.

To decide who was the actual forger does not appear to me to be important, for the chief responsibility need not necessarily be his. Neither is the character either of Scott or of Hogg at stake, since both have shown themselves morally capable of the act, and neither would have seen in it more than a joke. Mr. Lang is quite convinced it was not Hogg, and it is only fair to point out that it was not he but Scott who had a motive in its production, it was not he but Scott who published it to the world, it was not he but Scott who received the credit for its discovery.

But personally I disagree with Mr. Lang; I think —and I have given my reasons for thinking—that a considerable portion of the ballad was written by Hogg.

That Scott was the author of various lines I have endeavoured to show, and there can be little doubt, I think, that some stanzas are entirely by him, but surely it is undeniable that the ballad as a whole had been composed before it came into his hands— or to his knowledge.

My view is that Hogg in the first instance tried to palm off the ballad on Scott, and failed; and that then Scott palmed it off on the public and succeeded.

For what the public has gained by the contribution, thanks are due partly to Hogg, partly to Scott ; but let us, as gentlemen and honest judges, admit that the responsibility for the deception rests rather on the laird than on the herd.

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